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FACT OR FICTION

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College of Missions Lectureship, Series III

The Character Christ Fact or Fiction

By

WILLIAM JEFFERSON LHAMON

Dean of the Bible School of Drury College, Springfield, Mo.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

President CHARLES T. PAUL, M.A.

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FOREWORD

THE argument of this volume was presented in a course of addresses at the College of Missions in Indianapolis during the session of 1913-1914. It constitutes, in its published form, the third annual series in the College of Missions Lectureship.

The author's utterances were received by an earnest company of students, professors, ministers, mission board officials, foreign missionaries, and candidates preparing for Christian service in various parts of the world, all of whom felt themselves to be under the spell of a master in the exposition of "the immortal theme." The lectures are now offered for wider circulation in the belief that to readers generally they will bear fresh and stimulating witness to the reality and supremacy of Jesus as the world's Saviour.

Dean Lhamon's qualifications for his task are ample. He has the mind and learning of the scholar, the practical experience of the minister and professor, the literary style of one who has drunk deeply from "the well of English undefiled." A life-long student and teacher of the Gospels, he does not hesitate to subject them and the character they enshrine to the most search-

ing inductive analysis. And what does he find at the end of the process? The historical Jesus,

> "No dead fact stranded on the shore
> Of the oblivious years,
> But warm, sweet, tender, even yet—"

And he finds this real Jesus not by a blind act of credence reaching back into the dark, but by following a clear path on which the mingled light of faith and reason shines.

His method is a challenge to intellectual fairness. To those who argue that, because the character of Christ is presented as perfect and miraculous, it is therefore untrue, Dean Lhamon replies that the marvel of its perfection is the veriest pledge of its truth. For, who could fabricate a Jesus? It is easier to accept the historicity of the Evangelists' portraiture than the modern speculative theory of literary idealization. Only the fact of Christ can account for his character as we have it in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. That is the main thesis of the lectures.

To the vast literature, both critical and interpretative, which has grown up about the Gospels, and with which Dean Lhamon is quite conversant, he makes almost no reference. Even recent writers who might have brought strong support to his argument, though they have wrought on different lines, as for example, Professors David Smith, Forrest, Mackintosh, and Weinel, are not mentioned. This author with his own insight and

élan proceeds in his own bold way. His argument is indeed not new, but the elaboration of it is. Indeed, he has given it new life and form and trenchancy for our day. He has put into it something of the verve that glows in the pages of "Ecce Homo." As a piece of inductive apologetic in the field of Christology—drawn wholly from the Gospel narratives—it is doubtful whether anything fresher or finer has been done since Horace Bushnell's classic on "The Character of Jesus" was issued more than half a century ago.

This book is timely, in view of the recently published negations and mystifications of our modern symbolists and mythicists like Mr. J. M. Robertson, Dr. A. Drews, and Professor W. B. Smith, whose rock of offence seems to be the real Jesus of the Gospels. These writers have ventured to stake their sanity and learning on the astounding theory that the Jesus whose hand has turned nearly two millenniums of history, and who is the highest motive power in our civilization to-day, was only a first-century survival of a Palestinian sun-god, Joshua, centre of a pagan cult of Jewish "Christists." And as for the records of the Evangelists: "You rake together a thousand irrelevant thrums of mythology, picked up at random from every age, race, and clime; you get a 'Christist' to throw them into a sack and shake them up. You open it, and out come the Gospels."* Dean Lhamon has no

*Dr. F. C. Conybeare.

formal dealing with these assumptive vagaries of pseudo-scholarship. He does not even name this mythic hypothesis, except in a single paragraph in his introductory chapter. For that reason his constructive argument against it is all the more effective. When bread is given, the stone may be ignored.

Twelve of the young men and women who heard these lectures have since gone to three continents to witness to the Jesus who called them, and who stood before them in such warm reality on those memorable days and evenings in Graham Chapel.

May the blessing which came to these missionaries flow to the hearts of many readers as they see anew in these pages "the image of the Son of Man."

CHARLES T. PAUL, President.

COLLEGE OF MISSIONS,
INDIANAPOLIS.

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I

THE ARGUMENT

"Deep strike thy roots, O Heavenly Vine,
Within our earthly sod;
Most human, and yet most divine,
The flower of Man and God."

IF Jesus lived he is the transcendent man of history. If he did not live the character Christ is the transcendent one of literature. In either case we are confronted with a phenomenon thus far inexplicable on any naturalistic hypothesis. The argument of the following pages is an essay in relativity. Is it easier finally to accept the Christ as the transcendent figure of our human history or as the transcendent character in our human literature?

As to his transcendency—that is indisputable. Though some of the following valuations have grown familiar by frequent use they still bear repetition, and especially here as related to our theme. They are but a few of the panegyrics that the foremost writers, scholars, and historians of many lands and

languages have united in conferring on Jesus. These writers have with unanimity taxed the resources of their various languages in seeking superlatives suitable to the expression of their reverence for him. With unanimity they have discarded moderation, and the wonder is that no one thinks them extravagant.

"Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets," says Emerson; "he saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished by its beauty, he lived in it and had his being there. Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnated himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world."

Goethe, in his "Conversations with Eckermann," is quoted as saying: "If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Jesus devout reverence, I say, certainly. I bow before him as the divine manifestation of the highest principles of morality. Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human mind expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it glistens and shines forth in the Gospel."

Guizot, in his "Meditations on the Essence of Christianity," says: "The supernatural power and being of Jesus may be disputed; but the perfection, the sublimity of his acts and precepts, of his life and his moral law, are incontestable."

"I think Jesus Christ's system of morals and religion as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see," said Benjamin Franklin.

Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," says: "It may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has, indeed, been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft and persecution and fanaticism, that have defaced the church, it has preserved, in the character and example of its Founder, an enduring principle of regeneration."

Gladstone, in his "Review of Ecce Homo," says: "Through the fair gloss of his manhood, we perceive the rich bloom of his divinity. If he is not now without an assailant, at least he is without a rival. If he be not the Sun of Righteousness, the Friend that gives his

life for his friends and that sticketh closer than a brother, the unfailing Consoler, the constant Guide, the everlasting Priest, and King, at least, as all must confess, there is no other to come into his room."

In his "Sartor Resartus" Carlyle speaks almost passionately as follows: "If thou ask to what length man has carried it in this manner, look on our divinest symbol, Jesus of Nazareth, in his life and his biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human thought not yet reached; this Christianity and Christendom—a symbol of quite perennial infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest."

Renan, in his "Life of Jesus," speaks of him in the most eloquent and unreserved forms of the superlative; he says: "He founded the pure worship—of no age, of no clime—which shall be that of all lofty souls to the end of time. Not only was his religion that day (John 4:24) the benign religion of humanity, but it was the absolute religion; and if other planets have inhabitants endowed with reason and morality their religion cannot be different from that which Jesus proclaimed at Jacob's well. Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His

worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

Because of its special pertinency to the theme in hand one more well-known paragraph must be permitted here. It is from Jean Jacques Rousseau. "I will confess to you," he says, "that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history they contain should be himself a mere man? Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary righteous man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he described exactly the character of Jesus Christ. The resemblance is so striking that all the church fathers perceived it."

Because of its source in the very bosom of present-day Israel the following has a special claim on our attention. Max Nordau, Jew,

critic, and philosopher, says: "Jesus is soul of our soul, as he is flesh of our flesh. Who then could think of excluding him from the people of Israel? St. Peter will remain the only Jew who said of the Son of David, 'I know not the man.' If the Jews up to the present time have not publicly rendered homage to the sublime moral beauty of the figure of Jesus, it is because their tormentors have always persecuted, tortured, assassinated them in his name. . . . Every time that a Jew mounted to the sources and contemplated Christ alone, without his pretended faithful, he cried, with tenderness and admiration: 'Putting aside the Messianic mission, this man is ours. He honours our race and we claim him as we claim the Gospels—flowers of literature and only Jewish . . .'"

Our argument seeks to build simply on facts. It desires to beg not a single question. We have the four gospels. As related to our course of study no matter when they were written or by whom, or whether they are inspired, or whether they are historically reliable. Questions of date, authorship, inspiration, and historicity belong to other lines of study, the results of which are highly reassuring to such as hold an evangelical faith. But for the purposes of our study Matthew, Mark,

Luke, and John are simply facts. They belong to the realities of our objective world. Their influence is such to-day, and has for centuries been such, that we cannot class them as negligible. They challenge us, so simple and searching are they, so commanding and abiding. They have long since taken their place as world literature, the best and most dynamic that the world has produced.

These writings present to us the character called Christ. Whether Christ was or not, the character Christ is. It is a fact enshrined in other facts, creative of them, affected by them, and immensely affecting them. Speaking in literary fashion, Christ is the hero of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Other characters are there in abundance, humble disciples, leaders of Jewish sects and parties, Roman officials, but they are secondary to this one and contributory to it. It is impossible to mistake the central, outstanding, leading character in these writings. Never was there such a wide gap lying between the hero of a work of literary art and the complementary persons of the drama.

Broadly speaking, this Christ of the gospels is either real or fictitious; a historical possession and heritage, or a literary presentation merely. Quite explicitly, by a literary or fic-

titious character is meant such a one as the Wandering Jew, or Jean Valjean, or Ben Hur, or Hamlet. Is the Christ of the gospels such a character? The hypothesis is possible, just as any hypothesis is possible in mathematics or logic. Is it workable, or does it reduce itself to an absurdity?

If we assume that this transcendent character is a fiction we are at once confronted with the problem of its creation as a mere matter of literary achievement. Who created such a character? Who attained to the ideal and clothed it with such realities of literary simplicity and power? Fishermen? Brawny boys of the Galilean lake? Hated publicans? Shepherds? Vine-dressers? Peasants of the Judæan hillsides? Or did it originate among the self-sufficient Pharisees? Purse-proud Sadducees? Fiercely rigid rabbis? To them all the ideal was utterly foreign, and to most of them hatefully repugnant. Even the saintly souls of that last Jewish and first Christian century, such as Simeon and Anna, were looking for "the consolation of Israel," and not for any such reality as corresponds to this literary ideal. Or if the ideal did not originate among the Jews of any class, or if not in the first century, but among unknown writers in an uncertain age, how has the history of

such an unparallelled piece of work been so effectually lost?

The question of creation becomes many times more difficult in view of the fact that our greatest writers, with the ideal before them, and the gospels in hand, have not presented us with a single character comparable to Christ. The greatest writers of our nineteen centuries are, let us say, Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, Goethe, and, cautiously one may add, Victor Hugo. They lived in Christian lands. They breathed a Christian atmosphere. They wrought with materials furnished by Christian civilization. Yet not one of them presents us with a character that can for a moment compare with the Christ of the gospels. One cannot put Shakespeare's Hamlet in the same category with the Jesus of Matthew. Poor, great, crazed Hamlet—how he falls down in that sane presence! Ben Hur and Jean Valjean, already mentioned, are among the great characters in literature, and the most Christian. It is held by some that Jean Valjean is the greatest character ever drawn in fiction. As to "Ben Hur," probably no book produced in the nineteenth century has been more widely read and highly appreciated by the more intelligent and Christian classes. In the presentation of both characters

there are situations that would degrade Christ. The chariot race, for instance, fits Ben Hur and helps to make him. One cannot think of Jesus in such a situation. He is entirely too great for that. It would belittle him infinitely. Jean Valjean climbs a wall in a blind alley to elude the police; finds himself in a convent garden; to escape detection allows himself to be carried out in a coffin and put in a grave; warned against coughing or sneezing, he answers, "A man who is escaping does not do such things." Such situations are factors used by a great writer in building one of the greatest characters of all times. A hundred such situations might be chosen from "Les Misérables," any one of which would be ruinous to the Christ of the gospels.

It has been suggested that our great writers have not tried to present us with a character comparable to Christ, implying that if they should try they might succeed. But why have they not tried? And why did these four try? And how came they to succeed, to rise so infinitely in their creation above all predecessors and successors? They had no model. Later writers have theirs, and, therefore, should find the creation of such a character vastly easier of achievement. Besides, the wonder is a fourfold one. It is a commonly

received conclusion of New Testament scholars that Mark's gospel is the first of the four. His Christ is an unmatched masterpiece except as matched by his compeers. Who dares to touch a masterpiece must be himself a master and even he may mar it. But Matthew follows Mark with large sections of new material, and the masterpiece still holds; if possible, it is heightened. Luke follows Matthew and Mark with still other sections of new material, and the masterpiece still holds; if possible, still further heightened. Last comes John, strikingly different from the three, almost wholly new in material, distinctly doctrinal, profoundly meditative, gloriously aglow with spiritual fervour, confessedly evidential, and still the masterpiece is unmarred; if possible, it is heightened. On the hypothesis that this is fiction we are confronted with a literary phenomenon so utterly apart from all else in that line, so foreign from its fellows, so quite unique and absolutely unaccountable as to call for a new category in literature—the category of miraculous fiction. It would require more than human genius to forge this fourfold, unmatched, literary wonder. "The inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."*

* Rousseau.

If, on the other hand, we assume that Christ really lived, and wrought, and taught, and died, and arose from the dead, as these writings say he did, the literary problem vanishes at once. Quite unassuming, commonplace people, raised to the level of discipleship under such a master, could easily tell just such unadorned tales of what they had seen and heard as are here told. History here is easier than fiction, and not so strange as fiction would be. The presence of the real Christ among the disciples explains why they wrote, and what they wrote, and how they achieved as writers what none besides them has achieved. They do not create a character, they present a person. Pilate led Jesus forth officially, saying, "Behold the man." They have led him forth in their simple sentences, saying, "Behold the man." With the vanishing of the literary problem there comes the problem of the person of Christ, and that has its solution not in literature, but in God. He is, in Tennyson's worshipful terms,

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love."

The above presents the alternative, fiction or fact. There is a third possible hypothesis, namely, that Christ is partly real, and partly fictitious. There was, the theory assumes,

such a young man as Jesus living in the first years of the first century. He was wholly beautiful, strong, and regnant. He is fit to be ranked with the foremost representatives of our race. Moses was not more reverent; Cæsar not more imperial; Socrates not more profound; Buddha not more compassionate. But that Jesus was other than they; that he was in a unique sense the son of God; that he wrought miracles, healing the blind, the lame, the lepers; that he raised the dead, and was himself raised from the dead—all this belongs to the glorious garments of legend or myth woven about the real Christ by the devout imaginations of his disciples during the generation or two or three that succeeded him. The theory balks at the miraculous. It is attractive to an age trained in scientific ways of thinking. But miracles are not so much a stumbling-block now as formerly, for science herself is becoming reverent in the presence of her own limitations. She is discovering that there is something beyond her working hypotheses and her hypothetical electrons. Microscope and crucible are telling not half the story after all. The laboratory has its miracles of mystery quite as much as the pulpit. The final miracle that both the laboratory and the pulpit must face is not the incidental one,

such as the healing of the leper or the raising of the dead, but this miracle of manhood and character whom we name Christ. He is "the moral miracle of history." He is the fundamental miracle, and our study reaches back to him. It asks, could the fond imaginations of his lowly disciples, narrowed by tradition, cramped by environment, hardened by hatred of other peoples, could the imaginations of such disciples have clothed the memory of a mere man in mythical garments divine?

Such a miracle of character creation on the part of the longshoremen of Galilee would be more unaccountable than Jesus Christ the real, the man divine, the brother supreme, the gift of God.

There is a fourth possible hypothesis, if it may be dignified by the term possible, namely that Jesus is altogether a myth; that the existence and personality of such a man is not a necessary precedent to primitive Christianity. This is known as the "Christ-myth" theory of the "History-of-religions" school of thought. The school is evolutionary in the extreme and thoroughly materialistic. It has no room for any of the categories of a spiritual faith, or of a theistic world-view. Being materialistic it is by consequence pessimistic, and being without God it is without ethical

and spiritual realities. Christianity, accordingly, must be construed together with all other religions as a development, a "syncretism," a compound of Jewish Messianism, Neo-Platonism, Roman dogmatism, and whatever else it could pick up in Alexandria, Babylon, Athens, or Rome.

Our line of study replies by asking, was the character Christ picked up thus? Who among the non-moral and immoral Greek gods and heroes is in a single feature comparable to Christ? Or where in the pantheon of Rome with its twenty thousand gods shall we find a single altar inviting us to kneel and adore such love, forgiveness, masterliness, universality, and heroism divested of militarism as we find in the Christ of the gospels? As little do the Jewish heroes suggest Jesus. He is not like Samson or David or Judas the Maccabee. Croly's Salathiel is the ideal hero of the days of Jesus, and the tragedy of the story rises out of the impassable gulf between the two. As to the Messianic hopes and plans of the times of Jesus—it is the very secret of the cross that Jesus was compelled to antagonize them. Claiming to be the long-looked-for Messiah of his people Jesus persisted in being such a Messiah as they did not expect; such as they hated; and such as they would not receive.

To the political and military Messianism of his day he opposed his irenic and spiritual propaganda. The issue was quite sharply drawn, and Golgotha was the sequel. Such is the presentation of the gospels. If the Jesus of the gospels is a syncretism of the elements and times at the disposal of the writers, how comes it that he is so different from those elements and times; so winnowed; so strange and unique; so antipodal; so transcendent? Absolutely he is "a root out of a dry ground." On the hypothesis, let it be repeated, that he is a fiction or a myth, we are confronted by a literary problem of such novelty and uniqueness as to place it in the category of the humanly impossible, that is, of the strictly miraculous.

Stated still further, and more explicitly, our scheme of thought shifts the point of difficulty from the physically miraculous to the ideally miraculous in moral and spiritual traits of character. If it should be granted that the writers of our gospels, with the help of tradition in a myth-loving age, did invent the stories of the miracles in a mistaken attempt to glorify their hero, it would still remain inexplicable how they invented a moral and spiritual hero great enough to fit the miracles, and how they succeeded in attributing to him many

and varied characteristics in their perfection, characteristics harmonious one with another, but out of keeping with, and contrary to, the deepest desires and most cherished ideals of the age; and finally, how they—the writers of our gospels—succeeded in making this *tour de force* of literary creation and idealism appear to the men of their own and succeeding times the most attractive, and commanding, and dynamic piece of realism the world has ever known. We are beginning to see that the character itself which we find resident within the unassuming pages of the gospels is the real miracle with which we have to deal, and that these unassuming pages, glorified by this character, rise immeasurably above the highest level of all other literary achievements. The major miracle is not the healing of the blind, and lame, and deaf, and diseased. The major miracle is either this literary creation of a character more than humanly sweet and strong, unapproached and unapproachable, great and gracious, sinless, timeless, the wonder, the delight, the aspiration of humanity; or, it is the man Jesus himself, living, teaching, praying, healing, dying, rising—just as the gospels present him—the gift of God, the saviour of men. In the latter case this major miracle of reality has its solution in that

phrase just used, "the gift of God." In the former case, this major miracle of literary idealism has no explanation.

In a limited way the following pages present an inductive study of the character Christ as it appears in the gospels. Since it is the presentation with which we deal as author and audience, no critical valuation of the writings is needed or offered. The presentation at least is a fact. What can we get from it?

The suggestion of the literary problem of the possible creation of such a character as Christ is not new, but the elaboration of it here presented has not heretofore been attempted so far as the author is aware.

The essays comprising the book have been the growth of many years. The substance of them in the form of lectures has been presented in many a class-room to gatherings of college and university students, before a number of ministerial associations in various states, frequently in churches as features of evangelistic campaigns, and frequently from the Chautauqua platform. In December, 1912, the theme was treated by the author in a series of lectures on the T. H. Bondurant Foundation in the University of Illinois, and in February, 1914, in a series of lectures in the College of Missions in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Many times the request has arisen both from individual auditors and from assemblies for a book embracing the theme as a whole. This has emboldened the author to add another volume to the vast library that has gathered around that glorious young man who never wrote a sermon nor penned a parable.

The chapter on the theme "Christ and Other Founders" is appended in response to a suggestion on the part of President Charles T. Paul, of the College of Missions in Indianapolis, his thought being that the work as a whole will be rendered by this addition more effective in its appeal for aggressive Christian activities, especially in missionary ways. The matter of the chapter, while not directly germane to the argument of the book, is surely germane to the spirit of it.

It is the conviction of the author that our age needs not so much a new apologetic as a deepening sense of reality relative to Jesus and the message of Jesus. We need convictions that we cannot escape of the spiritual actualities lying back of the person and the consciousness of Jesus. His transcendent verities must be ours, and they must become the controlling forces within our souls and throughout the realm of our social relations. This is what the prologue of John's gospel

should mean to us in its strong and simple phrasing of the fact of the incarnation. In his "In Memoriam," over the grave of his friend Tennyson cried,

> "And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds,
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought,
>
> Which he may read that builds the house,
> Or binds the sheaf, or digs the grave."

II

UNIVERSALITY

"Not thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of thee
Which ends in hate of man."

JESUS lived, or the character Christ was produced, in a narrow age. The times to which the records relate him were intensely provincial, Pharisaical, rabbinical, exclusive, and unsympathetic. Politics and religion united to repel the outside world. Learning was subsidized in the interest of an exclusive caste. The temple cult forbade on pain of death the participation or presence of a gentile. Jehovah himself was localized that he might be monopolized. No one could live in Palestine and escape an environment of contemptuousness, superciliousness, exclusiveness, and hatred.

These are severe sentences. They are not made as an arraignment, but simply as a historical statement. It is our province not to judge the people of the times of which we

speak, but to present them. The presentation is essential to our study. We cannot know Christ, or if the character be but a character, we cannot appreciate it except by way of comparison and contrast. We must know the times to know the man. It is thought that environment makes or mars. Have we here, on the pages of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, a character that springs out of environment, or one that rises above it, struggles against it, contradicts it, and corrects it? Though the statements are severe they are not too strong. Some paragraphs are needed to justify them.

From the dark days of the Babylonian captivity the Jews had been taught to esteem themselves as the chosen people of God, and to look upon all not Jews as rejected by Jehovah. All not Jews were Gentiles, and the Gentiles were dogs. It was commonly said that one Jew was of more worth in the sight of God than all the Gentiles on the earth. Gentiles were likened to the spittle cast from the mouth of a Jew. A Jewish midwife was not allowed to help a Gentile mother in her hour of need lest she assist in bringing into the world an unclean worshipper of unclean idols. The Jews esteemed themselves the children of Abraham. That in itself was enough

to distinguish them. Their genealogical tables, the ordinances of their religion, and the experiences of their past had united in making them a peculiar people, and in fostering pride in their peculiarities. By the time of Jesus they had learned perfectly the lesson of that extreme exclusiveness, which once had been to them a necessity as a shield against idolatry and which had now become their preference. To the orthodox Jew, says Edersheim, "the mental and spiritual horizon was bounded by Palestine. It was the land. All the rest of the world except Babylonia was outside of it. All in it bore the impress of sanctity. God created the world on account of Israel and for their merit, making preparation for them long before their appearance, just as a king foresees the birth of a son. Nay, Israel had been in God's thoughts not only before anything had been created, but even before every other creative thought."

Many laws had been framed by the Rabbis the purpose of which was to separate like a wall between their own people and the gentiles. A gentile child as soon as it was born was esteemed unclean. It was unlawful for a Jew in any way to aid in gentile worship, or to give pleasure to the worshippers. No other single sentence, perhaps, could more fully express the feeling of the Jew

toward the gentile than the following: "The best among gentiles, kill; the best among serpents, crush its head." "Those who worshipped mountains, hills, bushes, etc.—in short, gross idolaters—should be cut down with the sword." "Heretics, traitors, and those who had left the Jewish faith should be thrown into actual danger and all means of their escape removed. No intercourse of any kind was to be had with such, not even to invoke their medical aid in case of danger to life, since it was deemed that he who had to do with heretics was in peril of becoming one himself." "If a heretic returned to the true faith he should die at once—partly, probably, to expiate his guilt, and partly from fear of relapse. Terrible as all this sounds, it was probably not worse than the fanaticism displayed in what are called more enlightened times. Impartial history must chronicle it, however painful, to show the circumstances in which teaching so far different was propounded by Christ." It is necessary to transport oneself into this atmosphere, as Edersheim has well said, "to understand the views entertained in the time of Jesus, or to form any conception of their infinite contrast in spirit to his new doctrine. The abhorrence, not unmingled with contempt, of all gentile ways; the worship of the letter of the law; the self-righteousness and pride of descent, and still more of knowledge, become thus intelligible to us, and equally so the absolute an-

tagonism to the claims of a Messiah so unlike themselves and their own ideal." *

The Pharisees constituted the most religious sect among the Jews, and as they sought to practise what the rabbis taught the two may be taken together. The rabbis were the learned class. They were students of the law it is true, but more especially and emphatically, of the traditions of the fathers. They held these traditions of more weight than the law. They committed to memory vast masses of traditional trifles, technicalities, quiddities, hypotheses, and cases of which they made a hedge about the law, their theory being that the law could not be transgressed till this hedge had been broken down. They lived by rule, walking with their heads bent as though heavy with knowledge. They loved "greetings in the market," and were disappointed if people did not bow low to them and hail them as "doctors." They measured their Sabbath with a tape line and weighed it in a scales. So many furlongs one might walk—no further. The weight of a dried fig one might carry. But if he tossed it up and caught it falling, had he carried twice the burden by carrying the bur-

* Quotations from "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," by Alfred Edersheim, Vol. I, Bk. I, Ch. VII.

den twice? If he caught it in the same hand? If he caught it in the other hand? If he caught it in his mouth? All these were technical questions, debated seriously!

"The standard as to what constituted a burden was whether the thing could be turned to any practical use, however trifling. Thus, two horse's hairs might be made into a bird-trap; a scrap of clean paper into a custom-house notice; a small piece of paper written upon might be converted into a wrapper for a small flagon. In these cases, therefore, transport would involve sin. Similarly, ink sufficient to write two letters, wax enough to fill up a small hole, even a pebble which you might aim at a bird, would be burdens." It was seriously debated whether if a shoestring came loose on the Sabbath it was lawful to stoop down and tie it. On that day one must not heal either man or beast. One must not sow, or reap, or winnow, or take a stitch with a needle, or scrape the ground with his foot, or climb a tree, or ride, or swim, or clap his hands, or strike his side, or dance, or cut his nails, or trim his hair. A woman must not look in a mirror lest she spy a gray hair and be tempted to pluck it out. To scatter two seeds was construed as sowing grain, and was unlawful. To pluck one blade

of grass was reaping, and was unlawful. These are but a few of the numberless prohibitions and casuistries which ran through sixty-four and a half folio columns in the Jerusalem Talmud. By such rules the Pharisees sought to regulate their Sabbaths. The result was that they made the day a burden, and themselves its slaves; or if by legal fictions they escaped from this, they in that case deceived themselves by a mere pretence of legal holiness.

On ceremonial handwashing before and after meals, and when they returned from the street or the market, the Pharisees placed a superlative emphasis. To omit such washings, they said, was as bad as murder, or adultery. Tithings of his garden herbs, fastings, sacrifices, and formal prayer, belonged to the weighty matters of the Pharisee's religious life. By his overvaluation of forms, ceremonies, rituals, technicalities, fictions, trifles; by his undervaluation of social, ethical, and spiritual entities, the Pharisee, the rabbi, became a cold, heartless, loveless, meritorious legalist, quick to hurl a stone at any who ignored his trifling traditions. Such were the leading churchmen and schoolmen of the time of Jesus.

The Sadducees were purse-proud agnostics,

priests and high-priests, sanctimonious men of the altar, holding an annual monopoly on sacrificial beasts, and pushing high the price at every Passover, Pentecost, and Harvest-home. No modern man ever had a more complete corner on any necessity than they on sacrificial oxen, rams, and lambs. With this special interest in hand they wrested fortunes from the religious necessities of their pilgrim brothers at the altar. They made the temple "a den of thieves."

Out of this environment the character Christ springs. In spite of this whole adverse ensemble this character Christ is represented as universal in his sympathies, precepts, and plans.

His universal sympathy is shown in his invariable attitude toward man as man regardless of the accidents of poverty and riches, learning and illiteracy, race and nationality. He shows no preference for the poor man because of his poverty or for the rich because of his riches; for the Jew because of his Abrahamic blood or the Roman because of his highly prized citizenship. The social bonds that he recognized were in no sense narrowly partisan: they were broadly human. The only lines that he drew between man and man were those that cut deeply into character. In this

he stood apart from his people as a whole, and distinctly from their learned men of the rabbinical schools. The rabbis despised the "common herd," saying, "this people who know not the law are cursed." Jesus, early in his Galilean ministry, affirmed that he had a message for the poor. He even made it one of the proofs of his Messianic claims. To the poor and to the despised and "accursed" common people he showed the utmost kindness. He healed their diseases, fed them when hungry and fainting, praised their pitiful sacrificial gifts, comforted them in sorrow, and raised their dead.

He is represented as the poor man's friend. Is he the rich man's enemy? Has he antipathy for the rich because they are rich? If so his sympathies are partisan, not universal. The representation is not so. He forgives Zacchæus, preaches faithfully to Nicodemus, enjoys the hospitality of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and loves while he warns the rich young man.

The Roman tax-gatherers, called publicans and invidiously classed with sinners, were hated and despised. No Pharisee would allow the hem of his garment to touch them. Jesus put himself on terms of intimacy with them, dined with them, and bravely called one of them

into the circle of his special disciples and private friends. It was heroic to choose Matthew. What an affront to custom and clannishness! How broad and brotherly! The Jews hated likewise the Samaritans, and would have no dealings with them. Jesus talked familiarly to the Samaritan woman at the well-side, roused her and her people, and saw the souls of Samaria as fields white unto the harvest. His sympathy knew no bounds of party, race, or nation.

His precepts are universal. Like the multiplication table, they are applicable everywhere and always. One cannot think of a time or a place where the Golden Rule is not advisable. Centuries pass; thousand-fold intricacies come to our society, commerce, and politics, but that rule holds. Not one of the parables of Jesus is yet threadbare. The Sermon on the Mount is as remarkable for what is not in it as for what is there. Not a word about Jewish altar-forms, priests, rams, lambs, golden candle-sticks, shew-bread, scapegoats, clean meats, new moons, sabbaths, and shekinahs. All that was temporal, merely national, evanescent, passing, outworn, falls away from that strangely elevated, daring, revolutionary collection of simple sayings which we call a sermon. In reality it is the platform of an endur-

ing kingdom, all the planks in it for all men, and their children's children to a thousand generations.

Jesus refuses to be limited. He strikes the note of the universal. Rabbinism cannot stifle him. Phariseeism cannot terrify him. Ritualism cannot misguide him. Nationalism cannot dwarf him. In the midst of hatred he loves. Surrounded by trifles and triflers he lifts up a code of eternal principles. In an age that revered the past he turned to the future and planned its progress. Out from a labyrinth of smothering traditionalism he traced the way to light and liberty. In the midst of fierce and warring sects he stood aloof, and lifted high the banner of catholicity. Such is the presentation of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

His plans are universal. His programme is imperial. It includes all nations. It is fraternal, educational, developmental, vital. In an age of warfare he cried, "Put up the sword." While militarism ruled the world his captaincy voiced itself in the single command, "Go teach." His people longed for release from Rome, and the rebuilding of the nation in its ancient pride and power. Even his disciples looked no higher, knew no better, and hoped for nothing further. A kingdom of Israel,

centred in Jerusalem, with throne and crown and army and pomp and pride and power, was in their minds. They would drive out the Romans or make them slaves. They would turn the tide of history. They would bring their Messiah to a throne in Jerusalem. They would build an empire to rival Cæsar's or Solomon's. That was their program. It was backed by an intense patriotism, and a not inglorious nationalism. "The people were drunk with the vision of outward felicity and political greatness under their expected world-conquering Messiah." "How beautiful," says the Jerusalem Targum, "is the King Messiah, who springs from the house of Judah! He girds his loins, and orders the battle against his enemies, and slays their kings, and their chief captains; there is no one so mighty as to stand before him. He makes the mountains red with the blood of his slaughtered foes. His robes, dyed in their blood, are like the skins of purple grapes." To the Jews the anticipated Messianic kingdom was one of unspeakable glory and wealth and luxury. The city of Jerusalem was to reach to Damascus. In it there were to be houses three miles long. The country within and around was to be full of pearls and precious stones. Grains of wheat would grow as large

as the kidneys of an ox. A single grape would load a wagon or a ship, and men would draw wine from it as from a cask.

Out of their intense, mistaken nationalism; their glorious, mournful patriotism, the Jews of the days of Jesus built such castles, and dreamed such dreams. Such visions quickened the hearts of their best people, and whetted the daggers of their worst ones.

But with it all Jesus would have nothing to do. His greater soul was fixed on an age-long, world-wide kingdom, and one that should be built in the lives of men rather than on the hills of Judæa. He planned indeed that his robes should be "like the skins of purple grapes," but not with the blood-stains of Jewish-Roman battlefields. He planned a kingdom of the teacher, the brother, the friend, the Good Samaritan, the returning prodigal, the forgiving Father, the redeeming brother. He cried, "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The method of this kingdom, the magnitude of it, the beneficence, the universality of it, are foreign to all peoples and times save those that are dominated by the ideal presented in the four gospels. The creation in such an age, or in any age, of such ideals, and such a character as fictions merely

would be more wonderful than the God-given reality. Could such an ideal of truth and truth-teaching, and of golden-rule potency as basal to a world-kingdom, could such an ideal have grown out of that hard old Jewish soil? Did Phariseeism invent this ideal of universality? Did Sadduceeism? Did Rabbinism? The shepherds of the hill-sides? The fishermen of the lake-sides? Ah, the dreams of prince and peasant, of religious sectarian and political zealot, were far other than this. Can the narrow and national produce suddenly the cosmopolitan and universal? The laws of environment and evolution and literary production do not work that way.

III

MASTERLINESS

"Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee."

TO be always manly and a master; correct in judgment, incisive in action, inerrant in speech and daring in reform; to utter immortal precepts, sermons, parables, and prayers; to be enthusiastic yet dispassionate; never to experiment, but always to do; to be morally faultless and in conduct admirable; to suffer without resentment, and bless the lips that curse; to mold men, reforming and transforming them; to live and die in perfect keeping with one's own highest ideals, yielding neither to the threatening of foes nor the pleading of friends—these are marks of masterliness. These and similar ones are attributed to Christ in the presentation of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

There is a persistent high level in the conduct of Jesus. Nothing is rarer than this.

All but invariably strong men have their weaknesses, and men that are good have their undesirable traits. Jesus is never presented as a weakling, and responding to a limitless variety of circumstances he is never taken off guard. If we assume the character to be a fiction, this perfect poise is wonderful indeed. Where is there another character so invariably excellent? Where is there one who does not now and again disappoint us by falling below the expectation which he himself has created? Where is there one whose continuity of excellence finds its climax in a style of dying comparable to his way of living, and whose resurrection deeds are a fitting sequel both to his life and to his death?

Jesus is represented as masterly in speech. We have reports of his sermons, parables, prayers, and (in John) a kind of Socratic dialectic. In estimating him as a speaker, one must remember that he was a young man untrained in the great schools of the time and unpractised before the public. Does he give the impression of a tyro? Does he practise long and ardently, and even then blunder and stammer and fail and apologize? Such is the rule with young speakers. What impression from the first did Jesus make? In his home in Nazareth they "wondered at the

words of grace that proceeded from his lips," an indication that he was a beautiful and accomplished speaker. At the close of the Sermon on the Mount it was said, "The multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." When he taught in the synagogues of Galilee they said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" When the priests and Pharisees sent officers to take him they returned empty-handed, saying, "Never man spake like this man."

How daring he was! How original! How revolutionary! How he cast himself in absolute abandonment up against the hard and old and outworn legalism, traditionalism, Phariseeism, Sadduceeism, and every love-killing conventionalism of his day! "You have heard," he cried in his mountain sermon, "that it was said by them of old time—Moses and the rabbis—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the one cheek turn to him the other also." He dared thus to set himself against that ancient tribal law of rude revenge, though sanctioned by Moses and all the schools of Judæa's learned fathers. He dared in the interests of his new kingdom to repeal that law, and replace it with

his new law of the other cheek. That is masterly, and it is but one example. His sermons are aflame with many like it.

The impression made immediately by the young preacher on his hearers lingers through the centuries. His readers still feel that he spoke "with authority, and not as the scribes." The sermon reported in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, and less fully in the sixth of Luke, bears every mark of a strong, clear-seeing soul. There is no hesitancy here, no apology for plain and incisive speech, no shrinking from the utterance of great and transforming truth, no fear of originality. There is maintained a brave, high-level of ethical and spiritual thought and revelation, a decided break with the body of rabbinical teaching of the time, and an undisguised departure from the legalism of former times. "In all history there is no parallel to it," says Mr. Hughes, in his "Manliness of Christ;" "it stands there, a miracle or sign of God's reign in this world, far more wonderful than any of Christ's miracles of healing. Unbelievers have been sneering at it and ridiculing it, and Christian doctors paring and explaining it away ever since. But there it stands, as strong and fresh as ever, the calm declaration and witness of what mankind is

intended by God to become on this earth of his."

In the gospels one cannot go amiss for masterly speaking. It appears wherever Jesus is quoted, in his most public utterances, in the privacy of the inner circle of his disciples, in dealing individually with troubled souls, in uncovering the plots of his enemies, and in great and heart-breaking lamentation over the doomed city of Jerusalem. Having spoken he never apologized, or expressed a regret, or recalled a single word. His yea was yea, and his nay, nay.

Masterliness discloses itself in the forms of speech as well as in the substance of it. It is not usual with us, perhaps, to think of Jesus as a literary artist. But a second reading of the parables may convince us of that also. The parable is one of the most difficult forms of literature. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that the parables of Jesus are so many and so finished. He is, above all other artists, the master of the parable. In all their beauty parables sprang from his radiant soul in an impromptu way whenever occasion called for them. Take as an instance the fifteenth chapter of Luke. The situation that called forth the group of parables in it was this. Jesus was dining with publicans and sinners, a

very daring transgression of the social conventionalism of the time. Leading religious aristocrats, Pharisees and Rabbis, were present murmuring, and saying with fine scorn, arching of brows, curling of lips, "this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Undisturbed, unresentful, Jesus answered, first with the parable of the lost sheep, as much as to say, "these are my lost ones, these at whom you sneer; this is my way of seeking them till I find them; thus I carry them back to my Father's fold; the angels rejoice over one that returns more than over the ninety and nine that went not astray." As though this compassionate and artistic reply were not enough, he proceeds in a manner perfectly unruffled and self-contained, presenting the parable of the lost coin, the housewife sweeping till she finds it, the rejoicing when it is found; as much as to say, "these are my lost jewels, these at whom you sneer. I am seeking thus till I find them, and though you may not, yet the angels rejoice when they are found." Still he proceeds in the same vein, delicately rebuking, kindly explaining, graciously pleading, presenting at last the pearl of all parables, that of Fatherly Love, misnamed "The Prodigal Son." Instead of being crushed by the murmuring of his proud critics their censorship

had given him the opportunity of presenting the gospel in miniature, a portraiture of divine grace, a literary masterpiece, an imperishable parable. This group of parables presents a climax of beautiful, self-contained, artistic repartee. In this light there is nothing like them.

The prayers of Jesus are models of devotion, brevity, and directness. As to his answers —they are unanswerable. No one came to him carping, but he went away pained for having "put his hand on that burning mountain." He was the prince of conversationalists as shown by his talk with the woman at the well in Sychar, with the two on their way to Emmaus, and with his disciples on the night of the last supper.

In his works also Jesus is represented as being altogether masterly. What he does is done at once and effectually. He is never presented as an experimentalist. He never tries this way and that to see whether he can heal the blind or deaf or lame, or whether he can raise the dead, and how. He does not try at all, he simply achieves. A word, a touch, a command, an obedience—it is done. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," cries the leper. "I will; be thou clean," answers the Master. This is the more noteworthy

when we reflect that through all ages medicine has been an experimental science, or if not it has been mingled with magic. But the presentation of Christ makes him as free from magic on the one hand as he is from experimentation on the other.

Take for example his dealing with death. Nothing could be more staggering to fiction writers than to create a character great enough to cope with death; to be the master there, rather than be mastered. Yet the presentation of the gospels in this capital matter is as unstrained and simple as in the general tenor of their recital. Jesus is represented as calling death sleep, and at once treating it just as though it were sleep. To the little maiden he said in charming simplicity, "Talitha cumi;" she arose as if answering a mother's morning call. To the young man at the gate of the city of Nain he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." He arose, and was restored to his mother. To the brother of Mary and Martha he cried, "Lazarus, come forth." "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes." Of his own approaching death he gave many intimations to his disciples, and passed calmly on to meet it, saying, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again."

On the morning of the third day he arose, leaving the empty tomb as his last and mightiest miracle. The presentation of this majestic dealing with death is very wonderful. The story has all the touches of genuineness and reality, while its idealism is the most unique and enrapturing that the world has known. The writers of our gospels had no model for such achievements, unless indeed they were writing history, in which case their model was the man himself.

Was his cleansing of the temple a miracle? If not, all the more wonderful is the masterliness displayed by it. Twenty-five acres of marble-paved courts! A million Jews there to worship! Thousands of rams and lambs and oxen there for sacrificial purposes! The people with a necessity, the priests with a monopoly! Extortionate prices! Bulling and bearing! Haggling and hurrying! Oxen lowing and tradesmen screaming! A corner on sacrificial beasts made the more hideous by a pretence of worship—all this is what Jesus found in his Father's house. Was there anything effeminate in his character, any overplus of the "meek and lowly" when he gathered up a handful of ropes with which they had littered their marble pavements, twisted them into a lash, drove out the herds, overthrew the money

tables, and cried, " You have made my Father's house of prayer a den of thieves "? To-day we hold in high esteem the manliness of the man who has a lash for " special interests," a Wendell Phillips, a Lincoln, or a Luther. Let us not forget that lone-handed young man who threw himself in absolute reformatory abandonment against the whole bad mass of mechanical worship, systematic extortion, and stand-pat Phariseeism there in the heart of his nation. His was a tremendous protest.

There is no severer test of masterliness than a man's success in dealing with men. The slightest touch of effeminacy kills the man who aspires to be a leader of men. Weakness and inefficiency are no less fatal. From the schoolboy to the statesman the born leader must be a born man, virile, positive, effective, commanding. Now Jesus took a dozen whole-bodied men from the lake and marts of Galilee, brave, hardy, storm-tried fellows, patriotic, restless, ready for a fight. He bound them to him with the cords of a man; he taught them and trained them; he inspired and rebuked them; he moulded them to his mind; he crushed them into denial and despair. Thereafter he revived their faith and love; he committed to them a mighty mission; within three years and a half he made those fishermen, just

as he had promised, fishers of men, and set them amidst the thronging thousands of Mount Moriah's temple courts, there to challenge and preach, to witness and to convict, to baptize believers by thousands, and to create a new movement of spiritual might within the heart of decadent Judaism. All in all he made them the world's foremost preachers and prophets, heralds and reformers, the new-born spiritual giants of the world's new spiritual era. He who can thus hold men, and mould them, and crush them, and recreate them, and give them a living mission in a dying age, must be himself a master among men.

If the presentation of this wonderful characteristic on the pages of our gospels is fiction merely, then it is not only a miracle of literary creation, but it is a miracle of literary realism to the point of deception. The literary creation of such sermons and parables and prayers; of such abandonment in heroism; of such efficiency in healing; of such leadership among men; of such reformatory zeal; of such idealism and of such power to crush the old and build the new, would be an achievement unparalleled by our masters of fiction. That men "untrained in art" should "weave such agreeing truths" would be more wonderful than Jesus himself, the Man of men, the Gift of God.

For a moment one is constrained to drop the argument and turn the heart to this wonderful man. Sitting long at his feet love and admiration grow into adoration, and arising at last we follow him, as the disciples of old, first to the place of prayer: thence to the beckoning duties of our day. If in the Gethsemanes of this world we shall be found ever wakeful with him, then also in the rough ways of the world we shall not be found wanting to him.

IV

AUTHORITY

"O Lord and Master of us all!
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine."

WE are accustomed to think of authority as an official attribute rather than an inherent one. The creator of fiction finds no characteristic more difficult to bestow on his heroes than that of inherent authority. It is not so with the accidental authority of the autocrat, or the delegated authority of the military or civil officer, or the achieved authority of the expert student. The Czar of Russia has a tremendous authority by reason of the accident of birth. The President of the United States has a delegated authority. The authority of expert opinion comes by way of life-long study and distinguished achievement.

Higher still is the authority that springs from wisdom, knowledge, conviction, inerrancy, immeasurable greatness of soul. There

are few indeed whose actions are such as to call for no repentance, and whose words are such as never to need an apology or a correction. The presentation of Christ in the four gospels is that of a character who, under the most varied and trying circumstances, lived a life of absolute rectitude, and whose speech was inerrant. To this character there is attributed the authority of a transcendent vision and a commanding personality. This is what we term the attribute of inherent authority, and the difficulty of bestowing it is the difficulty of creating a character sufficient for it. Our wealth of fiction has not even remotely approached, amidst the wonderful variety of its characters, anything comparable to the Christ of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in this matter of an authoritative norm for humanity.

This inherent authority is attributed to Jesus in his ethical and spiritual teaching as voiced in the Sermon on the Mount. His attitude toward the laws, precepts, and customs of his people and of the past is not that of a learner like the rabbis all around him, or that of one indiscriminatingly loyal; but that of a free and discriminating and criticising and even repealing King and Lord.

Use was made in a previous essay of Matthew 5: 38-42, and it was said quite tersely, " He

dared in the interests of his new kingdom to repeal that law and replace it with his new law of the other cheek." That law, namely, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," is not a rabbinical one; it is a Mosaic one; it is embedded in the book of Deuteronomy, one of the most spiritual books of the Old Testament. It is a relic of the ancient tribal law of blood revenge. "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, burning for burning, smiting for smiting," cried all the tribes of the pre-Mosaic world. Moses did not rise above that terrible tribal law of rude and ready justice and revenge. He checked its more frightful workings by the institution of the cities of refuge to which the "unwitting slayer" might flee. But there it is, and there Jesus found it in the most sacred and authoritative legislation and literature of his people. Does he bow reverently to it, and gladly, like any conventional Pharisee or rabbi? Does he obey it? Had he done so Judæa would have been drenched in blood at his hand. Unhesitatingly, boldly, he sets it aside. He lifts the first personal pronoun up against it. Authoritatively he cries, "But I say unto you that you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Nothing could be plainer than this kingly repeal of the

old, this royal enactment of the new. And this is the tone from first to last of the mountain sermon.

That sermon is the new king's platform of his new kingdom, and to make room for it he had to clear away much. Authoritatively he pruned and cut and digged and discarded, and when he was done, and his plan stood complete, the ethnic and tribal features of Judaism were totally eliminated. The Jews placed vital values on the Sabbath, circumcision, the priesthood, the altar, the sacrifices, the day of Atonement, and their various cycles of feasts. Jesus does not so much as mention any of these. He expresses no interest in them. Every merely transient, out-worn feature of Judaism falls away from his teaching, and the young King stands out on a platform as universal as the multiplication table or the Golden Rule. With the ancient, wondering people we still exclaim, " He speaks as one that has authority and not as the scribes."

In the Sermon on the Mount there is an authoritative assumption of the Fatherhood of God. The thought of God's fatherhood had been poetically and cautiously suggested in the literature of the Jews. But fundamentally and constructively to the Jews God was a monarch, and their government was a theoc-

racy. This thought about God conditions Old Testament history and prophecy. Jesus passes beyond it. To him God is more than monarch; he is Father. Nothing short of this prime term of endearment and kinship could satisfy the brave and tender heart of Christ. With him it was not a passing figure of speech merely; it was a constructive concept. His teaching was dominated by it. If he exhorted to good works it was that the Father might be glorified. If to the love of enemies, it was that his disciples might be "sons of the Father in heaven." If to prayer, it was that the Father might hear and recompense. If to fasting, it was that the Father might see and approve. If he taught his disciples to pray for a kingdom, it was for the Father's kingdom. If for forgiveness, it was the Father's forgiveness. Jesus announces that God is Father, and then proceeds boldly, authoritatively to construe his teachings and construct his kingdom in accordance with that fundamental premise.

In the Johannine account of the cleansing of the temple there is the striking phrase, "my Father's house." "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." In these words Jesus asserted his authority for his daring and reformatory

act. Therein lay his right of protest. As the Father's representative he made the protest effective. The rights resident in the Father are resident also in the Son, and the Son's expression of them is the Father's expression. "Here at Jerusalem, in the very central place of the nation's religious life, amidst surroundings which would surely have given pause to any reformer not quite assured of his mission or of himself, Jesus throws down his challenge to the world and announces himself as One to whom the established order of things counts for nothing at all, as One who dares to lay his hand in reproof and correction upon anything he held unworthy, however consecrated by usage it might be."

This assertion of authority coupled with the claim of a unique relationship to God carries us very far into the secret of all the claims and deeds of Jesus. Conscious of kinship with God he asserted what otherwise he could not have asserted, planned what otherwise he could not have planned, commanded what otherwise he could not have commanded, and did what otherwise he could not have done. His assertion of authority in word and deed is the natural outflowing of his divine relationship. If he is the Son of God he must speak authoritatively, as God would speak, and act

authoritatively, as God would act. In other words, correlative with the tremendous claim of conscious and unique kinship with God there must be a tremendous use of the first personal pronoun. From a purely literary standpoint a feeble use of personality following such a claim would be quite incongruous, while, on the other hand, to create a character assuming such a kinship and to create situations and teachings becoming to such assumption would be an unprecedented literary achievement.

Take again the mountain sermon. Five times the form is used or its equivalent, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, . . . but I say unto you." In Luke's more abbreviated report of this sermon there is an intimation of the same authoritative style of speech. It must therefore have been a frequent and characteristic formula with Jesus thus to cite the ancients that he might supplement their legal ethic with a spiritual one, or that he might quite set aside their unethical teaching for a highly ethical one. Now the ancients whom he thus cited, and freely supplemented or corrected, were not the hopeless traditionalists of his own day, the rabbis, who never dared to say an original thing; they were the law-givers of the Old Testament.

In the eyes of the contemporaries of Jesus they "of the old time" had attained to such sanctity and authority that to criticise them was heresy; to touch them was sacrilege. In their eyes Jesus suffered accordingly, and paved his way to the cross by every authoritative pronouncement in which he transcended or repealed the laws of their far-away fathers.

In the light of the whole field of gospel presentation it is not too much to say that Jesus assumed a judicial and official attitude toward the decadent theocracy of his people, toward the ethical and social questions propounded to him, and toward the founding and furthering of his new kingdom.

Jesus is represented as speaking with authority upon the profoundest of spiritual experiences and conditions. To the paralytic let down through the broken roof he said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." This was an assumption of such authority in the spiritual realm as to bring him under the charge of blasphemy at the hands of the scribes. He met the issue squarely. He asserted that "the Son of Man has authority (exousian) on earth to forgive sins." In proof he at once placed the visible miracle of physical healing by the side of the invisible miracle of spiritual healing. At his word the helpless

invalid arose, folded his couch, and went out through the surrounding throng. The simple comment of the narrator following the recital of this incident is highly significant. "Seeing it the multitudes feared, and glorified God who had given such authority to men." "To men", for to them he seemed a man, no more, the type of men. And to them there was revealed in him a new deposit of spiritual authority; a dynamic of almost dreadful significance.

The incident recorded in the first part of the eighth chapter of John has not good manuscript authority, but that does not invalidate it for present purposes. It is a presentation truly characteristic, and fits precisely into our plan. The case was well worked up by the enemies of Jesus. The Pharisees, legally precise, religiously heartless, determined to entrap the young and daring and free constructionist, and revolutionary reconstructionist of law and life. They brought to him a woman taken in adultery, "in the very act," they said unblushingly. They reminded him that *Moses,* in the *law, commanded* that such should be stoned. And they added in tones of anticipated triumph, "What sayest thou?" It was a challenge. It was a dilemma. The young teacher must hang on this horn or that. Strangely, unexpectedly, calmly he stooped; he wrote on

the ground, perhaps for their eyes what he did not want the woman to see. They pressed their case. "They continued asking him." He arose with such lightning in his face and such words on his lips as probed even their law-hardened consciences. They too were stained as the woman was; Jesus knew it, and they knew it. They had not been caught; the woman had, and there was the difference. He met their challenge with a challenge. He challenged those stained men to throw stones at that stained woman. They, law-hardened though they were, dared not meet his challenge, or stay longer in his withering presence. Out they went, slinking, one by one. Then lifting himself up in the presence of the woman and in the face of an ancient law, which neither called her to repentance nor allowed her to reform, he said graciously, "neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." Here Jesus assumed the authority of setting aside the law of Moses, and of forgiving and paroling "the prisoner at the bar."

Never was the native authority of Jesus displayed to better advantage, and never did it appear more threatening to the schools and the cult of the Jews, than when he appeared in the temple courts, and especially during those last days preceding his death. After the sec-

ond cleansing of the temple he continued within its marble courts, teaching the thronging worshippers there, and healing the sick. He became a disturbing centre of influence, like a new planet throwing old orders out of orbit. When the temple authorities could stand it no longer they came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" No Hillel or Gamaliel had ordained him to the rank of a rabbi. He had asked for no license from their schools, yet he was intruding upon their prerogatives. Contrary to rule he was teaching by the rule of his own clear-seeing soul. Jesus taught as inevitably as the sun shines. This the men of the schools could not understand. Ground out duly, and duly labelled, they taught as they were told. The school, the party, the sect had authorized them, and their teaching had, according to their own claims, been stereotyped for two thousand years. How could they understand Jesus? The distance of the poles was between him and them. Had he answered them directly they would have trodden his answer like a jewel in the mire, and they would have turned again to rend him.

The record in John of Christ's last night with his disciples mingles strangely words of

kindliness and kingliness. The "Lord and Master" washes his disciples' feet, and in a single simple sentence immortalizes the act as an emblem of service in his new realm, the realm of the king who is brother first and king thereafter. Over against many a time-honored commandment he places one new one, making it central, imperative, and of more weight than all the rest; "As I have loved you, love ye also one another." For the perplexed and troubled souls of his disciples there is the consolation of his equality with God; "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Have they felt lost in their quest of the Father? Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Is the Father likened to a husbandman? Then Jesus is the true vine, and his disciples are the branches. Fruitfulness is conditioned on residence in him as the branch in the vine. The disciples should not be lonely and lost; they should have the Holy Spirit as their Comforter and Guide, Vice-regent of the Master himself. These chapters, the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of John, rise to a climax in their mystical sweetness, and in their rugged, authoritative commandments and assurances. The hearts of the disciples, doubtful and disturbed that night, were to be broken and disconsolate before another night. And

Christ their Master, who speaks to them in kingly style, who legislates by right of love divine, transmutes his lordship into friendship, becomes their suffering Servant and their redeeming Brother.

The presentation of the risen Christ is in the same vein as regards this characteristic of authority. There is the same style of high-souled speech, dominating all within its compass, yet tender and compassionate, concerned with such things as haunt the secret chambers of the heart, and such as make for peace with God. Concerned also with an empire, a world-kingdom, a majestic, age-long reign, not of the club or the sword, the rack or the fagot, the army or the navy, but of the teacher, the brother, and the friend. With the emphasis of pierced hands, with yonder the empty tomb, around him once more the disciples of his former teaching days, he cries, "All authority is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Can this be fiction? If so, who dreamed it? Who planned it? Who created the situations? Who contrived this mingled manward grace and Godward glory? Who enshrined such royal ways of working in such peasant ways

of speaking? Who ever conceived of authority divorcing itself from force and wedding itself to love? Do the kings of fiction wash the feet of plebeians? Do the heroes of romance win their battles by praying, suffering, dying, rising? Do the plots of Homer and Hugo and Shakespeare in their unravelling disclose risen Saviours, Pentecosts, apostles, martyrs, a whole new era with twenty growing centuries in its bosom?

"Behold the Man," said Pilate, pointing. There stood forth Christ, robed in purple, thorn-crowned, bruised, bleeding. Men looked, and gazed. And still they gaze, beholding still the Man, forgetting Pilate, Cæsar, Moses; Athens, Rome, Jerusalem; priests, altars, sacrifices;—beholding still the Man.

V

LOVE

"Immortal Love, forever full,
Forever flowing free,
Forever shared, forever whole,
A never-ebbing sea!

"Our outward lips confess the name
All other names above;
Love only knoweth whence it came,
And comprehendeth love."

WE habitually think of love as a sentiment or an emotion or even a passion more or less transient. Almost never have we thought of it as a factor in character. Perhaps we are right in our estimate as it pertains to the average man. With him it is too easily transmuted into indifference or even into hatred. Were it something fundamental to him it would be otherwise, for what is fundamental abides and controls.

The love attributed to Christ is characteristic of him. It, like universality and masterliness and authority, is a factor wrought essentially into that which goes to make the character.

The character could not be what it is if love were not there.

There are circles of love. Self-love, however refined and laudable, is yet narrow in the extreme. Domestic love enlarges the circle to all who gather in close kinship, and is nobler by far. Beyond this there is patriotism, the love of one's fatherland, larger and nobler still. And beyond this, philanthropy, the love of man as man, regardless of race, colour, and condition. This is the highest, holiest human love, unknown to politicians, scarcely guessed by statesmen, preached rather than practised by Christians, and attained only by the rarest leaders of our race. It is this broad human love, inclusive of the narrower circles, that is attributed to Christ by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Sympathy and compassion are other names for it, and all that is comprehended under the term altruism is the fruit of it. Sympathy and compassion are exact synonyms and they mean *en rapport,* in touch with, suffering with, rejoicing with, one with. That is love. When it is said that Jesus had compassion on the hungry multitudes, it is meant that he actually felt their hunger. The pain was a physical pain to him, so admirably was he constituted spiritually and bodily. So of the sin-sick and

physically infirm people all around him. Their sorrows were his sorrows, and when they rejoiced in his healing and help their joy was his joy. It was thus that he did "bear our burdens," and "was beaten with our stripes." We must recover from the thought that the love attributed to Jesus was an assumed something, extraneous, a sort of other seamless robe that he could put on and take off at will. Let it be repeated, the love attributed to Jesus is fundamental to his very being. It abides with him and is a controlling factor in his teaching and the building of his kingdom.

For our purposes it may be defined as a persistently right attitude toward God as Father, and toward man as brother. To be persistently right toward God as Father, that is persistent sonship. To be persistently right toward man as brother, that is persistent brotherliness. Such Godward, manward persistence, is love—a radically different matter from sentiment or emotion merely.

Though love is thus fundamental to Jesus it has with him its emotional side, just as all love has. In him also love "seeks possession of its object, and lives for its object." It craves and it gives. On the lower levels its craving may take the form of selfishness. On the higher levels its giving grows divine.

There "unselfish giving is its life." "When it is said that God is love it is meant that love is the characteristic and abiding quality in God, by which his relations to other beings are determined." * If Christ's love is a disclosure of the Father's love it must crave, and give, and abide. It must crave the possession of its object. It must give itself in devotional ways to its object. It must be as a fountain that never fails, and as a branch abiding in the vine.

As thus defined love is attributed to Jesus in his teachings. The beatitudes have in them a tone of compassion from first to last. Their introductory word is a benediction and a protest. Jesus delighted to place his hands in blessing on the heads of the humble, neglected, ignored, and outclassed; the meek, the merciful, and the brave. He delighted in protests against the proud, the self-sufficient, the luxurious, and the unheeding. The traits that he blessed were despised in his day, and those against which he protested were valued and sought. In a pleasure-mad age he brought comfort to the mourning, and assured them that they were fortunate. In an age of warfare he brought the good fortune of the divine

* William Newton Clarke, D.D., "Outline of Christian Theology," p. 98.

Fatherhood to the makers of peace. In an age of cruelty he brought the assurance of grace to the merciful. In an age of blurred moral distinctions he blessed those who were hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and promised them satisfaction. This pronouncement of good fortune on the great masses of the very common people who were honest and humble and merciful and peaceable and anxious to be right and do right is indicative of his kindly attitude toward them. He loved them. He loved their simple, honest, kindly hearts and ways.

In rebuking a wrong attitude toward brothers Jesus puts anger where the ancient law of his land put murder, Mat. 5:22. In this he was simply consistent. If love was fundamental to the soul of Jesus it was fundamental to his kingdom; to such a kingdom anger and hatred are ruinous, and their fruitage is death.

The rightfulness and even the duty of hating one's enemies was the orthodox teaching of the times of Jesus and the centuries preceding him. The Old Testament teems with texts, legislative and lyric, in which such hatred is inculcated. Rabbi, Pharisee, and political zealot, all united in shouting a lusty "Amen" to this teaching, and in whet-

ting their daggers for the Romans, since they were the special enemies to be hated at that time. Against this ancient orthodox teaching, the young, ardent, reforming Christ is represented as lifting up his voice in unreserved disapproval, saying, " Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." This daring defiance of custom and orthodoxy; this brave repeal of the old law of the hatred of enemies; this equally brave enactment of the new law of the love of enemies, is at bottom, simply, logically, the setting aside of what was inimical to the soul and the kingdom of one whose love was fundamental.

In recreating the simple situation in Matthew 22:35f. one must know the lawyer. He is a rabbi, and he is a type of the school. He is a rigid traditionalist. His soul is full of the finest spun cobwebbery of legalism. He has been taught to " count and classify and weigh and measure all the separate commandments of the ceremonial and moral law." His teachers have told him that there were 248 positive precepts, being as many as the members of the human body. That there were 365 negative

precepts, being as many as the days of the year. That there were thus together 613, being as many as the letters in the Decalogue. Some of these were heavy and some were light; some were very heavy, and some were very light. The laws regulating the Sabbath, circumcision, and hand-washing were very heavy. To omit one's ablutions was as bad as homicide. But the heaviest of all precepts, so certain of the masters said, were those relating to their phylacteries and fringes. Each *tsitsith* or tassel or fringe must have eight threads and five knots and be bound with a thread of blue. To observe this law of the *tsitsith* rigidly was the same as if one kept the whole law. Filled with such absurdities, trifles clothed in legal majesty, mountains of nonsense made tremendous by tradition, this lawyer, this blind leader of the blind, comes to Jesus, asking, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" Jesus answered promptly, "Thou shalt love." Not a word about a single one of the 613 affirmative and negative precepts! Not a word about ablution, or the Sabbath, or the *tsitsith!* Sweeping the whole heaven of duty clear of such legislative puerilities, Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with

all thy might. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Love only is great as Jesus sees legislative greatness.

The " new commandment " given to the disciples under the most memorable and sacred sanctions of the last supper and the night of the betrayal is just this same old commandment of love made new by the master's new emphasis of it in his approaching passion of bloodshed and prayer. " A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." Not a word on that sacred night about a single sacred day, or doctrine, vestment, sacrament, or ritual! But a pleading, heartfelt holy emphasis on that which to him was vital. This new commandment thus emphasized and vitalized means more to the world a thousand times than all the Mosaic ten, and the priestly hundreds, and the rabbinical thousands, and the Romish and Protestant myriads. It is the sum of what is good in them all, and the absence of what is cold and hard and rigid and devitalizing in all mere legalism.

Many of the parables of Jesus are parables of love. The parable of the Good Samaritan is the presentation of a new neighbourliness based on love. " Who is my neighbour? "

The conventional answer is, the man whom you need. Christ's answer is, the man who needs you. Go, bind his wounds, and lift him up, and bring him in. See that he is sane and well and well started. Such is the new neighbourliness of the new kingdom of this strange character Christ. In sharp contrast with the Samaritan, a man despised by the Jew, and of a hated race, the priest and the Levite, typical members of the family of Israel, proud of their lineage, officially high, legally correct, go by on the other side of the blood-stained roadway. What interest have they in a man previously robbed? He has no tithes for them. He cannot bring them an ox, or a ram, or a lamb, or even a poor little dove or pigeon. Their glorious, blazing altar yonder on Mt. Zion awaits them. They hurry on while their brother by the wayside rolls in blood, with gaping wounds. Good, mechanically correct religionists they are, no doubt; devoted to the marble and gold of the temple, and the shew-bread, and the candle-stick, and the incense, and the smoke of the altar, and the tithes in the treasury, and their own pretty, white robes. But in all that there is no love.

The parable of the Prodigal Son should be renamed. It is the parable of Fatherly Love. The whole context shows that the Father's

part in the drama is foremost in the mind of Jesus. The elaboration of this pearl of parables in reference to the Father is noteworthy. He sees the son "a long way off"; runs to meet him; throws his arms about him; kisses him; clothes him anew with robe and ring of fatherly forgiveness and acceptance; orders a feast; exhorts every one to be glad, and cries out, "My son was lost, he is found; he was dead, he is alive." This is love. This is at-one-ment. This is atonement.

The parable of the Good Shepherd is a picture of devotion. Love lives between the shepherd and the sheep. They know his voice. He leads them out. They follow him. He gives his life for them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling, and cares not for the sheep.

The parable of the late labourers in the vineyard pictures the love of the Lord of the vineyard for all willing workers, giving "unto the last even as unto the first," because they were just as willing to work as the first, and "no man had hired them." This tender touch of pity for the workingmen who want work and are "turned down," cuts close to one of the deepest problems of the present day.

The miracles of Jesus were miracles of love. It is significant that he never wrought a mira-

cle on demand. "Show us a miracle," cried the scornful scribes. From Jesus no miracle came in response. But a way-side leper stands crying, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." At once there was the ready response, "I will; be thou clean." It was a miracle of love. Of the four thousand fed with the few little loaves and fishes it is said, "Jesus had compassion on them." Back of the loaves was love. Into this category of love may be brought all the miracles of healing and of resurrection. At the gate of the city of Nain, at the tomb of Lazarus, at the master's own empty tomb, there was love. While wondering at the minor miracles we have missed the major one, the real one, whose name is love.

The death of Jesus is the climactic love of Jesus. Taking the last twenty-four hours of his life as one dramatic movement, it is the drama of love. The supper with the disciples was a love feast with them. The prayer was a plea for their continued unity in love. Gethsemane was the agony of love struggling against repulsive wickedness. The disarmament of Peter, and the healing of the wound made in his Master's behalf, was a work of love. The command, "put up the sword," is but another phrasing of the new law of love.

The submission to the Roman soldiers was the submission of love. The forgiveness of the repentant thief was an act of redeeming love. The prayer, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," is the prayer of intercessory love. And the last words, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," is the commitment of love. It is wonderful, this love, uplifted thus, and drawing all men unto it!

Our literary problem again appears, although in this connection it seems almost irreverent. Was this ideal of more than human love realized in the actual Christ, or did that spiritually blinded, hatred-nursing age fabricate it? The term is not too strong. It was a hatred-nursing age. Antipathy grew rank between Jew and Gentile. Narrowness and dislike reigned between sect and sect among the Jews themselves. The hatred of enemies was taught as a religious and political virtue. The deadly fruit of the upas tree poisoned all Palestine, and Palestine does not account for Christ. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

A practical reflection seeks expression here. In the light of the love that was fundamental to the soul and the kingdom of Christ our

differences dwindle into trifles. Love is fundamental to the kingdom of Christ. But Calvinism is not; Arminianism is not; Socinianism is not; credal formulas are not; vestments, rituals, sacraments are not. We quarrel over creeds, sinning in our quarrels against the law of love. We magnify trifles, contending for and against them, falling out, and cleaving asunder the body of Christ, all the while transgressing his "great commandment," his "new commandment," wounding afresh his very spirit.

The deepest need of our hearts and our centuries is not answered by Westminster or Augsburg; by the Vatican or the Holy Synod; by the seven councils or the Nicene Creed; it is answered by the love of Jesus, revealing the Father's love, and culminating on Calvary.

Love was the handmaiden of Truth as the two went forth in the name of Christ to conquer the Roman empire. Anciently it was said, "behold how these Christians love one another." To-day the world does not so much observe that. Whittier's lament still has occasion to be heard; we

> "Melt in our acid sects
> The Christian pearl of charity."

"Holiness is central in God, but love is central in holiness." Without faith it is impossible to please God, and without love. His proffered Fatherhood must have its response in our gladly given childhood. Straight as a mathematical corollary from our childhood Godward comes our brotherhood manward. Without love it is impossible to serve men. Paul and John saw this, and Whittier and Longfellow and Lowell and Tennyson have celebrated it, each in his own style of lyric beauty. Only our theologians, logic-hardened, have seemed to miss it.

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of self, that trembling passed in music out of sight."

VI

SEVERITY

"Thou judgest us; thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn;
The love that draws us nearer thee,
Is hot with wrath to them."

THE kindliness and gentleness of Jesus cannot be overemphasized, but they may be so presented as to obscure his sterner and less attractive characteristics. To know the character Christ we must know its manysidedness. Severity is a characteristic that contrasts sharply with love, or at least on the surface seems to do so. The contrast heightens the interest in our study, while it lends to the character an unexpected completeness and strength.

Many of the reported sayings of Jesus are sharp and unrelenting. He rebuked certain classes of people in words that were plain and fearless. He sat in judgment on his age. He denounced externalism, injustice, and self-sufficiency. He used the most religious people of his time as warnings to his disciples

against hypocrisy, formalism, and soulless ceremonialism. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the doom of the nation. He sternly corrected his own disciples, and his warnings against future punishment are terrible.

More explicitly and as examples of his "hard sayings" the following may be cited:

In his earliest ministry he takes up John the Baptist's stern call to repentance. The call to a national repentance is a national accusation. John's voice had been almost fierce in its denunciation of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The axe for the tree of evil fruit and the winnowing fan for the chaff were his favourite figures. He saw around him a "generation of vipers." He rebuked the national pride in Abrahamic blood, and threatened the people with a baptism of fire. While the same threatening figures are not found in the preaching of Jesus, yet there is the same lofty demand for reformation, the same uncompromising attitude toward sin, and figures scarcely less terror-striking.

The use of the scribes and Pharisees as warnings to his disciples against a certain kind of religious life is a noteworthy example of Christ's severity. To get the full force of it one must remember that the scribes were the

most learned class of the time, and that their learning was of the most approved and legal kind. They were the honoured "doctors" of the day. The Pharisees made a business of being religious. They were perfectly punctilious about a thousand religious trifles, such as hand-washing, tithing, fasting, praying, sacrificing, counting even the threads and knots in the fringes of their religious gowns. They were extreme legalists, ritualists, formalists, ceremonialists. They were cold, hard, inhuman, loveless. They prided themselves on being agreeable to God seemingly in proportion as they were disagreeable to men. Now this learned class and this leading religious sect of his day were especially chosen by Jesus as examples to be avoided by his humble band of Galilean followers. To his group of peasant preachers he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The rebuke of ostentatious hypocrites has a very keen edge. "They have their reward," he said, they who fast, or give, or pray "to be seen of men." "They have their reward," he said again and again, the plain intimation being that with such vain-glory their reward forever ended.

When the occasion called for it Jesus was severe on his own disciples. This moment Peter is a "rock," praised for his confessional foundation of the new church. Next moment, opposing the redeeming plans of the Master, he is denominated "Satan," rebuked as an adversary, and plainly told that he is a stumbling-block.

James and John, led by their mistaken mother, foolishly desired to sit the one on his right hand and the other on his left when he came to the throne of their poor, worldly, Messianic kingdom of dreams. His answer to their request has a mingled tone of sorrow and severity. "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" In childlike simplicity and absolute lack of forecast they replied, "We can." He said, "Ye shall. But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give. It is for them [the multitudinous democracy of the redeemed] for whom it has been prepared of my Father."

The disciples of Jesus naturally participated in the religious fervour and national pride of their people. These emotions were mightily stirred by the glory of their temple, the richness of their worship and the stateliness of their ritual. To them the temple and the tem-

ple alone was "the house of the Lord." It was because Jerusalem was the sacred city of the temple that they sang at the end of their weary pilgrimages,

"Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem;
Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together;
Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord,
For a testimony to Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord."

The temple itself was a mountain of snowy marble and glittering gold. Terrace upon terrace it arose from the Court of the Gentiles to the Holy of Holies. Its tessellated, marble-paved courts comprised above twenty acres, and these courts were adorned with marble colonnades nearly a thousand feet in length. Hundreds of marble, monolithic columns, Corinthian in style, thirty-seven and a half to fifty feet in height, supported the marble roofs of the Royal Porch, and Solomon's Porch, and the others to the north and west. Stones sixty-seven and a half feet in length and nine feet thick, Josephus tells us, were built into the walls of the temple proper, and these were covered with gold. The Holy of Holies was roofed with marble and studded with golden spikes so that no unclean bird might rest there.

The "Gate Beautiful" was an arched portal, made of vari-coloured marble, eighty feet high, and adorned with a vine of gold, emblem of Israel, from which there hung clusters as large as a man's body of golden grapes. The altar of burnt offerings was forty-eight feet square and fifteen feet high. Beneath that wonderful acreage of courts and colonnades and altars and portals there were hidden cisterns that could contain ten millions of gallons of water. "Not Antioch in Asia," says Edersheim, "not even imperial Rome herself, excelled Jerusalem in architectural splendour. Nor has there been, either in ancient or modern times, a sacred building equal to the temple, whether for situation or magnificence. Nor yet have there been festive throngs like those joyous hundreds of thousands who, with their hymns of praise, crowded toward the city on the eve of the Passover." If ever an overplus of pride was pardonable it was the pride of the Jews in this dazzling holy place, thronged by a people who in number were "as the sands by the seashore."

But Jesus, looking with other eyes than those of his people, had not praised this temple. To his disciples it seemed an oversight. They sought to draw him out. They dreamed that this mass of architectural grandeur might

be a beginning of the glory of the Messianic kingdom. Fond dreamers they were, and they said to the Master one evening as he turned sadly away from a hard day there, "Behold, what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" It seems severe indeed that he should have dampened their ardour, destroyed their pride, and turned their anticipations into a great dread. His answer was fitted to do just that. "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone on another that shall not be thrown down." When later in the evening they asked him his meaning he proceeded at once to forecast the destruction of the city and temple, and the scattering of the people, a doom entirely different from their Messianic dream-castles. Their pride was his dread, and he gave to it a strange, sad, unreserved disclosure.

The warning to sign-seekers, Matt. 12:38-45, is, on the one hand, an absolute refusal to yield to the morbid demand of unreasoning men for a spectacular show of divine power, and, on the other, it is a lofty and terrible warning against a disposition more deadening than that of the Ninevites in the days of Jonah, or that of the Gentile queen of Ethiopia in the days of Solomon; a disposition like that of the house swept and garnished indeed

but empty, and inviting a sevenfold spirit of evil. Ah, that hard, cynical, self-sufficient heart of the typical Pharisee! Jesus saw it as the inviting home of many devils, and he spoke out plainly just what he saw.

Religion, like all else that pertains to life, has its fearful side, and Jesus met it squarely. Thus there was introduced an element of doctrinal severity into his sermons and parables. The hatred of brothers he likened to murder. To a certain class of Jews he said, " Ye are of your father the devil." Those who were hard and inhuman he located on the left of the throne in the parable, likened them to goats, and declared that they " should go away into everlasting punishment." The fruitless branch must be cut away. The bad fish in the net are cast out. From the " wicked and slothful servant " the one talent is taken. The tares in the field are gathered and burned. The way of the prodigal leads to the swine's husks. Among the thorns the wheat is choked. On stony ground it is withered and scorched. For the foolish virgins, unready at the bridegroom's coming, there is a fast closed door. Against the merely negative life there are constant and fearful warnings in the reported teachings of Jesus. Such is the presentation.

The twenty-third chapter of Matthew is considered by literary judges more terrible than the Philippics of Demosthenes. It is a tremendous denunciation of hypocrisy. It is a fearless, and yet fearful, arraignment of hypocrites. The "woes" fall here like the blows of a great hammer. They descend with crushing weight on the proud and vaunting, self-deceived and self-sufficient scribes and Pharisees. Those misleaders were accustomed to make distinctions where there were no differences. They are called "fools and blind." They enter not into the kingdom of heaven and they shut the door against them that are entering. They are "blind guides, straining out gnats and swallowing camels." They are "whitewashed sepulchres;" fair without, but full of "dead men's bones." A climax of awful import coupled with an imprecation is reached in these words: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say if we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye be the children of them that killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye

generation of vipers; how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?"

How shall we understand this calmly reiterated and awful severity? Did these hard words fall from lips of love? Did Jesus say these things? Did he find joy in denunciation? Is there a tone of vindictiveness here?

Much depends on the manner of one's speech. William Ellery Channing could read this twenty-third chapter of Matthew, this cycle of woes and cumulative denunciations, in such a way that his auditors were melted to tears. The last verses of this terror-stirring chapter give us the clue to its spirit. They save it from any touch of vindictiveness. They are a great sob. The whole chapter is a heart-break. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

And this is the clue to all the severity of Jesus. As a judge he tempers his decisions with sorrow. As a surgeon amputates to save life, so Jesus corrects that he may redeem. Seen aright his severity is but the other side of his love. "Whom a father loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Somehow we feel the love that

throbs and groans beneath the hard sayings of this character Christ.

But who in that age could have invented such a characteristic? And who could have made it thus the corollary of love? And who, having invented it, would have directed it against the most religious sect and the most learned class of the time? All the ideals of the day, even of the writers themselves, were against such fictions. It is easier to believe that Jesus actually lived and spoke thus than to believe that undisciplined Galileans invented such sayings, such situations, and such a character.

There is a deeply devotional element in the severity of Jesus. In his plans love and loyalty are wedded. "If ye love me keep my commandments." Personal love and loyalty stand related in his mind as motive and action. The severity of the commandment is not relaxed, it is simply transmuted into the joy of personal service. Mathematics has its severe lines and its rigid axiomatic truths; they are the basis of an attractive science. Music has her laws of harmony; inflexibly followed they lead to delight. Art has her harmony of colours, and she will not yield them; she must have them in her ministry of beauty. Just so, salvation has her cry of

warning, her rebuke of sin, her rules of righteousness, and her call to repentance. Love and prayer cannot ignore the distinctions between sin and holiness, condemnation and salvation, shame and glory. The gulf is there, with a point where it becomes impassable; and as the danger is dreadful so the salvation is gracious and attractive. Jesus saw clearly and affirmed positively a circle of tremendous verities. These verities heightened his love—may one say it reverently; they deepened his devotion; they led him by the way of loyalty to the cross. And there he died for these verities, and for us, that we also might be loyal to them, not coldly, slavishly so, but warmly, earnestly, lovingly so, through the love of him

"Whose kingly eyes looked throneward
While his priestly blood dropped downward."

VII

FORGIVENESS

"Through all depths of sin and loss
Drops the plummet of thy cross;
Never yet abyss was found
Deeper than that Cross could sound."

THE ancient Jew was quick to resent and slow to forgive. He fed his sense of nationality and honour on the histories of Moses and Samson and Gideon and David, all of whom were military heroes. Once a year he read the book of Esther and kept the feast of Purim, thus kindling anew within him the fires of vengeance which otherwise might have burned low. In the dénouement of that stirring Old Testament story Esther, the saviour of her people, becomes Esther the destroyer of her enemies, and in her vindictiveness she demands a second day's slaughter throughout the provinces of Ahasuerus. This made her the ideal heroine of the Jews, and anciently her example of retaliation was not lost on them. If that feast of Purim was not quite literally a dagger-whetting one it was

quite literally a temper-whetting one, and thousands of those who kept it were ready, if opportunity presented, to wreak their vengeance on their Roman rulers. This type of dreadful patriotism was still further fostered by the later history of the Jewish people. They could never forget, and they sought to emulate, the holy zeal and fierce fighting of the Maccabees. They knew and loved the story of the aged, heroic father, and of his equally heroic sons, Judas and Jonathan. There is in ancient history no presentation of a patriotism more lofty, and a vindictiveness more terrible than that of the Jews of the Maccabæan period.

In his inherited poetry and legislation the Jew was taught to hate his enemies. Numerous quotations are at hand from which are selected the following. In the 139th Psalm, attributed to David, the poet is made to say, as though it were pleasing to God:

"Do I not hate them, O Jehovah, that hate thee?
And am I not grieved with them that rise up against thee?
I hate them with a perfect hatred.
They are become mine enemies."

The purely lyric celebration of patriotism has surely reached its climax of pathos and passionate appeal in the 137th Psalm. But

that noble lyric, marred for the Christian by its last vindictive lines, was by those same terrible lines heightened for the Jew;

"O Daughter of Babylon that art to be destroyed,
Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
Against a rock."

As to the legislation bearing on our theme, the following selections may suffice. The book of Deuteronomy is remarkable for its beauty and spiritual power. Nevertheless, two ancient tribal laws are embedded in it whose effect was great in the long run of Hebrew history. These were the law of the ban, and the law of blood revenge. Under the former whole tribes were destroyed—men, women and children, and their cattle. In the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy seven Canaanite tribes are listed under this law, and in anticipation of victory the children of Israel were commanded as follows: "When Jehovah thy God shall deliver them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them; then shalt thou utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." The intention here is not to criticise the law, or the terrible obedience rendered to it but simply to state it,

and to estimate its effect upon the development and history of the people. Anciently it may have been expedient, and even necessary. It may have been related in the way of a quarantine to the very life and ethics and pure worship of the Hebrew people. But in the New Testament times such expediency or necessity had passed away, while the fierce spirit of the law remained, and by the law was justified. The other law, the tribal law of blood revenge, is also found in the book of Deuteronomy, not to speak of Exodus and Leviticus: "Thine eye shall not pity; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." So fully recognized was this law and its workings that the six cities of refuge were instituted in favour of the accidental, or "unwitting," slayer of his fellow, "lest the avenger of blood pursue the man-slayer while his heart was hot." One does not look far to see what a quick and ready use the Jews of Jesus' day would make of these laws in favour of their own spirit of hatred and thirst for revenge.

The Romans were the rulers of the Jews in the days of Jesus, as the Greeks had been in the days of the Maccabees, the Persians in the days of Esther, and the Babylonians in the days of Ezekiel. They hated them with a

hatred inveterate and inexpressible, and with all the sanctions of the patriotic hymns and laws of their far-away fathers. They hated the Romans politically, religiously, conscientiously, and with all the instincts of an assured racial superiority. If hatred, by reason of its perfection, could be admirable, theirs was an admirable hatred.

Coupled with such hatred there is not the spirit of forgiveness, but of retaliation. Hatred seeks the destruction, not the reformation of its victims. It lifts not the golden sceptre, but the iron dagger. In proportion as it is deep and abiding and conscientious it is the more implacable and deadly. One has but to contemplate this hatred on the part of a people as a whole, centering as it did in the party known as the Zealots, or Nationalists, or Sicarii, growing more and more exasperating to the Roman rulers, leading on to the internecine horrors of the years of 67 and 68 and 69, and to the dreadful siege and destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70—one has but to think of this to realize the awful fires of revenge that consumed the hearts of Judæa's sons.

But to the character Christ, as presented in our gospels, there is no taint or touch of this terrible hatred. In a former study love was

presented as a characteristic of Jesus. It was said that love was fundamental to his very being and a constructive principle in his new kingdom. As revenge is coördinate with hatred so forgiveness is coördinate with love, and the character in which love is an essential factor must include forgiveness also.

Jesus is presented as throwing himself unreservedly against the above trait of his times, and as teaching the unwelcome doctrine of forgiveness to a people bent on retaliation and revenge. The presentation is to the effect that forgiveness is with him not a casual act, but a customary one, and invariable as conditioned on repentance. And furthermore, his teaching of it is as incisive and persistent as his teaching of love.

His daring repeal of that lingering relic of the tribal law of blood revenge, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth," was used in an earlier essay as exemplifying another theme. He quoted it to disapprove it, though it had the sanction of Moses and the fathers. Against it he put the law of "the other cheek," and of "the second mile." And he meant it. Jesus meant that in his kingdom there should be no place for revenge, no sanction of retaliation.

In the model prayer Jesus included a petition for forgiveness based on the spirit and the

practice of forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." According to the record in Matthew this is the only petition in the prayer on which the Master paused to pass an emphatic comment, namely, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

It seems that Jesus' teaching on the subject was so frequent and emphatic that the Apostle Peter became impressed and perplexed by it. At last he said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Putting it up to seven was high indeed for a Jew. It is too high for many a twentieth century Christian, too high by six —or seven. But seven did not satisfy Jesus. One shudders to think what might happen had he allowed revenge to come back after seven. There love would end, and hatred with all her horrors would come back, and the new kingdom with its new law would be scarcely better than the old with its out-worn relics of the tribe and the jungle. But with Jesus limitless forgiveness keeps pace with limitless love, and his answer, with a cheery play on the word seven, came quickly: "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." That was his playful, pleading way of making the law a limitless one.

In his office as Saviour Jesus is represented as frequently forgiving sinful ones. They brought the paralytic for the healing of his body. The first act of Jesus was to heal his soul, saying, "Child, thy sins be forgiven thee." He dined with Zacchæus the publican, and upon his promise of generosity to the poor and restoration of wrongfully gathered goods forgave him, saying, "To-day is salvation come to this house." He forgave the sinful but repentant woman in Pharisee Simon's house because "she loved much." To the repentant thief on the cross beside him he said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The superlative incident in the presentation of this characteristic is the one on the cross. General Lew Wallace has shown his appreciation of it by its use as follows in one of the closing chapters of "Ben Hur": "Which way wilt thou have him faced?" asked a soldier, bluntly.

"Toward the Temple," the pontiff replied. "In dying I would have him see the holy house hath not suffered by him."

The workmen put their hands to the cross, and carried it, burden and all, to the place of planting. At a word they dropped the tree into the hole; and the body of the Nazarene also dropped heavily, and hung by the bleeding

hands. Still no cry of pain—only the exclamation, divinest of all recorded exclamations, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

It is scarcely a descent from this supreme act of forgiveness to that of the forgiveness of the Apostle Peter after he had denied his Master in the darkest hour of his suffering and need. What can be more distressing to a friendly and companionable soul than such desertion and doubt and denial as Jesus met at the hands of his foremost disciple? What can be more irksome than to teach and train and direct and rebuke and inspire through long months, and at last to see one's pains and patience bearing fruit in deliberate denial even of personal acquaintance? It is not hard for us to see that there were extenuating circumstances, looking as we do through the quiet presentation on the gospel pages. But it was not so easy for Jesus as chief sufferer in the midst of the affray. The presentation is that some days after the resurrection Jesus made but the most delicate and indirect reference to the threefold denial by the requirement of a threefold confession of love, and by a threefold exhortation to service. Three times, pleadingly, rather than commandingly, Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

And when he was assured of the disciple's love, he said three times, still pleadingly, "Feed my sheep." In such a tone, in such a mood there is no resentment, but a great heart-hunger for fellowship in holy and compassionate service.

This official forgiveness is thus represented as having been customary with Jesus, and persistent, though on the first occasion of its exercise it subjected him to the charge of blasphemy. "There were certain of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Under the Levitical law blasphemy was a capital crime, punishable by stoning. That sentence, "Child, thy sins be forgiven thee," was a daring one therefore, and would have been used by no ordinary person in fact, nor would it have been allowed by any writer of fiction to any of his characters. On the lips of the real Christ "it was at once a proclamation of his own sinlessness, and of his kingly dignity as the Messiah, in whose hands had been placed the rule over the new theocracy."

There is a further feature of this official claim of Jesus. In the whole body of laws of the Hebrew people there was no form of absolution, nor any enactment authorizing the

pronouncement of forgiveness by prophet, priest, or king. It was this that the scribes had in mind when they said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" The presentation therefore is that Christ was transcending the law, virtually that he was violating it, a presentation that would have been impossible to any fiction writer of that age, unless to such—if there were such—as were utterly rebellious against the institutions of the time, and that is not the spirit of the gospel writers. Forgiveness was a prerogative of God. No creative writer of the day would have thrown his hero up against that prerogative.

Many incidents of an unpleasant nature, such as that of the inhospitable Samaritans, the treason of Judas, the general defection of his disciples on the night of the arrest, and the reiterated, biting mockeries of his enemies through the long hours on the cross, were treated by Jesus in the spirit of a redeemer of men rather than a destroyer of them. His own rule of limitless forgiveness coördinate with limitless love has translation into life by his death on the cross.

And all this, according to the presentation, was under the protest of his own disciples. James and John, finding an Old Testament precedent for retaliation, wanted to command

fire to come down as Elijah did and destroy the churlish Samaritans when they refused to receive the Master. Peter protested against the announcement even of the betrayal and trial and death of Jesus, and in the crucial hour drew his sword in his behalf. But Jesus, true to his ideal, rebuked now and again his over-zealous disciples, stood against them, disappointed and bewildered them, and sought by self-sacrifice and non-retaliation to lift them up into his own new realm.

Again we face our literary problem. Was this characteristic, so new and unique, so utterly foreign to the times, so contrary to custom and law, so incomprehensible to the leaders of the land, so consistent with love, so perfected by death—was it a literary creation, or a gift of God in flesh and blood? Did Galilean fishermen, unimaginative hill-side peasants, shepherds, vine-dressers, temple-trained priests, perfunctory Pharisees, invent it all? Or did Jesus really live and teach it and practise it? Was it not Christ the real who discovered that love and forgiveness are—

> "Creation's final law,
> Though Nature, red in tooth and claw,
> With raven shrieked against the creed?"

VIII

SERENITY

"Hush every lip, close every book,
The strife of tongues forbear;
Why forward reach, or backward look,
For love that clasps like air?"

WE have in the gospels the presentation of a life that refused to be ruffled. In Jesus there is an imperial command over his own strong emotions. The peace into which the winds and the waves fell at his word is an emblem of his own tranquillity. Storms of passion on the part of others, stubborn and terrible, he encountered and quelled, while his own composure of spirit he all but invariably maintained. Once and again furious souls, more terrible than angry winds, raged round him, while through their storms he held his peace. Unelated by popularity on the one hand he was not cast down by adversity on the other. Dispassionately he foresaw tragedy, and he met it bravely. He kept a high pathway, and went straight to his goal. To his disciples he breathed out sweet-

est comfort in times of deepest distress. He faced the forces of organized hatred with equipoise and dignity. He bore malediction without resentment and injustice without revenge. His death was in keeping with his life. Silently he stood in the presence of Pilate; calmly he heard his sentence pronounced; patiently he bore the agonies of the cross; prayerfully he remembered his mocking murderers; resignedly he committed his spirit to God. He could have achieved such an "empire over his passions" only by a serenity complete and incomparable.

Serenity may be disturbed by success or disappointment, and that in proportion as the success is phenomenal and the disappointment grievous. According to the presentation in our gospels Jesus was subject to both. In his early ministry he met with ovation; in his later, with execration. At first his popularity was unusual and inspiring; at last his opposition was organized and deadly. To study his character under these conditions is to discover another of those wonderful traits which, quite incidentally presented, and perhaps unnoticed by the writers themselves, add so much to the charm of their pages and the force of our argument.

Very early in the ministry of Jesus, accord-

ing to the presentation of John, "When he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast many believed on his name, beholding the signs which he did. But," adds the writer, "Jesus did not trust himself to them, for he knew all men, and needed not that any should bear witness concerning man; for he knew what was in man." He "knew men." He knew how fickle they were, how suddenly enthusiastic, how far from conviction, how easily caught by the spectacular, how slow to receive the stable truth. He was not deceived by the hope of a quick triumph, nor was he, as a young man, carried off his feet by the sudden enthusiasm of a people agape at his miracles.

Matthew tells us that "great multitudes followed him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and from beyond Jordan." Luke, that the multitudes sought him even in a desert place, "and came unto him, and would have stayed him that he should not go from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore was I sent." Again, Luke tells us that having healed the man who "was full of leprosy," Jesus charged him that he should tell no man but go and shew himself to the priest and make the offering that Moses commanded.

"But so much the more," adds the writer, "went abroad the report concerning him, and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. But he withdrew himself into the deserts and prayed." In the sixth chapter of John there is a very significant incident presented showing the enthusiasm of the people for Jesus and his refusal to be influenced by it. He had fed the multitudes with the loaves and fishes, whereupon the people began to cry, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." Seized with political enthusiasm the people became impassioned in their Messianic hopes. They believed that their long-looked-for theocratic and military leader was at hand. They were ready and waiting for a king of the line and spirit of David, and for an insurrection against Rome under his leadership. They planned to "take him by force to make him king." By the "sign" of the loaves they had been inspired thus suddenly with theocratic hopes and kingly plans. And back of their kingly plans there were military ones. The daily sustenance of the army is one of the most difficult of military problems. But here was a young man who had solved that problem. Five loaves among five thousand, and whole baskets-full

of fragments! What a commissariat he alone would be for an army marching against Rome! At once they sought "by force" to make him king! But he, the record tells us, "withdrew again into the mountain himself, alone."

Fairly construed there was perhaps never in the history of the Jewish people a fairer opportunity and a more promising future for a kingly and military career. Historic precedent and military glory reaching back through many centuries, the intense patriotism of the whole nation, the glowing hopes of the myriads of Israel, their unbounded devotion to the theocracy for which their fathers suffered, their own present sufferings under Roman rule—all united to make a most inviting opportunity for Jesus to accept the crown, to seize Jerusalem, to rouse the nation, and to lift the standard of rebellion against Rome. Surely, as the people saw it, he must succeed, since he was their divinely commissioned one and God-sent deliverer. The times were ripe; the people were ready; the Messiah was at hand; why should they wait? Had Jesus lost himself in the fervour of the crowd; had he yielded to the plans of that Galilean multitude; had he permitted his vision of a spiritual kingdom among all men to fade away

in the heated national enthusiasm for the ancient theocracy; in short, had he as a young man yielded to these tremendous popular and national forces, history would have found in him not the Redeemer of men, but another David, or Judas Maccabæus, or Theudas, or Bar-cochba. A rebel against Rome, with battle-fields and bloodshed and devastation and hope of victory, and a throne in Jerusalem and an iron sceptre there—it was into this rôle that they would have driven him when "they came to take him by force and make him king." Let us be just to the Jews. There was not in all the ancient world an ideal of government comparable to that of the Hebrew people. Their king was king under God. Their government was the government of God. Their God was the highest, holiest, best, and truest that the ancient world possessed. To restore the theocracy as the friends and disciples of Jesus understood it was, from their standpoint, the most laudable undertaking, and the only official one, that could engage a God-commissioned man. Christ's action in that crucial hour is told in the simple words above quoted: "He withdrew again into the mountain himself, alone." Serenely he maintained his own lofty world-view, and his higher plans. He refused the throne that he might

go steadily toward the cross. In the loneliness of the mountain he kept tryst with God the Father of men rather than with God the Monarch of Israel, and before the dawn of day he was calming the fears of his band of Galilean disciples on their stormy little lake.

When on the next day the multitudes came thronging to him again he at once cut off their expected supply of loaves and fishes: put up to them the choice between spiritual loyalty to him or abandonment of him, and calmly saw them turn away, complaining about his "hard sayings." It was a crisis sufficient to try the soul of any but the serenest of men. From that day the popularity of Jesus among the Galilean multitudes was at an end, except for a spasmodic demonstration when he entered Jerusalem amidst their mistaken "hosannahs" within a week of his final tragedy. As he saw the multitudes melting away from him his only comment, so far as the record goes, was a quiet question to his twelve: "Will ye also go away?" The most popular young man of the day has suddenly become the most deserted, and to him all is well. He has spoken out unreservedly his new thought about God and man and spiritual things, and it at least shall stand. Henceforth he will take long walks with the twelve into lonely Gentile

regions; he will spend long months with Peter and James and John and the rest of them, patiently preparing them to be the heralds at last of his new thought, after he has sealed and signed it with his death and resurrection.

Scarcely had the days of his popularity passed when the active opposition of his foes began. For the forgiveness of sins he was accused of blasphemy. For the cleansing of the temple he was hated by an army of priests and tradesmen. For his free construction of the ancient laws he was plied with questions and tried with cases. For the neglect of ceremonial hand-washing he was censured by the most religious sect of the land. For healing on the Sabbath he was pronounced a sinner. In various ways they sought to entrap him, with the question of tribute to Cæsar, with the question of divorce, with the question of stoning an unfortunate woman to death, with the question of authority for teaching, with the question of the future life. Various ones of these questions have been used in other connections belonging to our argument, and are here suggested simply for their cumulative value. In the midst of such a running fire of opposition the Christ is represented as having borne himself both in word and act as only

one could do who lived in an atmosphere of tranquillity.

The presentation of Jesus on the occasion of the last supper as it stands in John is the masterpiece of a serenity that is sublime. His hour has come and he knows it. He has entered Jerusalem to be "lifted up." His care is for his disciples, not for himself. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He washed their feet, cleansing them by his own lowly service from unholy ambitions. He warned them of their coming trial and weakness: "It is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered. All ye shall stumble because of me this night." Once it is said of him that he was "troubled in spirit." It was in that moment when he was compelled to say in the presence of the traitor himself, "Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." The record indicates that that announcement sent a pang to his soul. Having designated the treasonable one with a strange and kindly indirectness, he recovered his composure with the reflection, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." The rest of the occasion was devoted by him to the breathing out of benedictions of peace on his disciples, and in prom-

ising them the Holy Spirit as Comforter, and in the institution of the supper. He, the Master, the doomed one, betrayed, rejected, mocked, maligned, with only a few quick hours between himself and the cross, poured forth spiritual blessings on his disciples as though his soul were an unfailing fountain. What sweet, calm words they are! "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." And again: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." There are mountain heights above the storms, and depths of the sea below them. Such was the soul of Jesus relative to the profoundest things of life and the abiding things of God—such at least is the presentation of the character on the night of the last supper.

The passing of the Passover on the night of Christ's betrayal and the institution of a memorial supper in his name, and for the furtherance of his kingdom, is an indication

of his unfaltering faith in the great future as he faced the hour which to his disciples was the end of all their hopes. In the bread and the wine of remembrance there is a calm forecast of a glorious continuance of his name and influence.

The serenity of Jesus is not the Buddhistic repose that springs from pessimism. It is not resignation to fate, retirement from the world and its evils, the desire to quench desire, meditation with a view to annihilation. The quietism that is attained by the utter abandonment of purpose is wholly foreign to Jesus. The tranquillity of Jesus is not a negation, and his peace is not the peace of a burial ground or a vacuum. His is the peace of victory, the tranquillity of triumph, the serenity that springs from security in God. His soul grew strong and quiet in a great optimism. To his disciples he said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." So confident were the Romans of victory that they were accustomed to sell at auction before the battle the land on which their enemies' tents were pitched. So Jesus in assurance of ultimate good found peace.

Nor is the serenity of Jesus the fruit of Stoical indifference to the things that should engage real men. He did not "treat persons

as pawns in the game which reason plays," and thereupon cancel his concern for them, or hold himself in cold aloofness because he looked upon human beings as "frozen together through their common relation to universal law." Jesus discovered in the world something beyond "an eternal somewhat that makes for righteousness;" something better than a "survival of the fittest;" and something higher than "fate's eternal decrees." He discovered a supreme purpose to be attained, a supreme will calling for loyalty, and a supreme soul to be loved and adored. He found in the universe a some One rather than a somewhat, and honouring that One he by consequence honoured all whom that One honoured. He loved men. He had compassion on the hungering and unshepherded thousands. He offered hope to the weary and heavy-laden. He mourned over Jerusalem, forecasting her doom. He prayed for his disciples that their faith might not fail. There is nothing of the Stoic in the Jesus of the gospels. The serenity of an icicle could never have won the heart of the world and the praises of humanity. His calmness was attained by a strange and unique union of the hand that heals with the heart that breaks.

Christ's mental sufferings in the garden of

Gethsemane constitute the outstanding exception to his usual serenity. We may not fathom the incident all in all. Fiction could never have created such a situation with its sharp contrasts of agony and victory. There is a crisis in sorrow and a triumph in prayer. "Yea once," as Elizabeth Barrett Browning has it,

> "Yea once our human sin hath rolled
> Between the righteous Son and Father,"

but it was for an hour only. Then the storm was over and the calm returned. Then he could say placidly to the drowsy disciples, "Sleep on now and take your rest. . . . Behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me." Having committed himself in a final act of consecration to the will of God, he could then without disturbance face the traitor and receive the kiss; meet the soldiers and submit to them though they came with swords and staves as if against a desperado; heal the wound that his mistaken disciple had made; accept the robe of purple and the crown of thorns; pass patiently through trials that were the hollowest mockeries; hear from the same lips the verdict of his innocency and of his death; go uncomplainingly to the cross and be numbered there with transgressors; and die at

last, praying for his enemies, and committing his spirit in peace to God.

One who has seen Munkacsy's picture, "Christ before Pilate," must feel that the artist has presented the mastery of peace and the picture of serenity in the figure of Christ. He, the Christ, is the only tranquil one in the whole group. Pilate sits troubled; over against him, supercilious Pharisees, vexed; the mob in the foreground, hooting with open mouths and up-thrown hands. Amidst them all, the figure of Jesus, pale, placid; the Lord of Life, perfectly poised in the presence of death. He has conquered and is at peace. It is thus that he made his heavenly life an irenicon for the troubles of earth.

> "Peace on earth and good-will!
> Souls that are gentle and still
> Hear the first music of this
> Far-off, infinite bliss."

IX

CONSISTENCY

"He cometh not a king to reign:
The world's long hope is dim:
The weary centuries watch in vain
The clouds of heaven for him."

JESUS is presented on the pages of our gospels as having a method and a purpose and as never turning from them. He never wavered. He withstood the opposition of foes and the pleading of friends. He stood alone against his age. Inherited traditions and time-worn customs were against him. His life and teachings were in antagonism to the fond, but false, ideals of his people. Having come with new cloth, he refused to make his mission a compromise and a patchwork on the old Jewish garments. New wine—new wine-skins! That was his brave cry. Yet he reflected sadly, "No man when he hath drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith, the old is better." He knew the cost of a live propaganda against a decadent age, yet he yielded not one iota to the Pharisees who murmured, the rabbis who raged, and the

priests who plotted. As a reformer he suffered, but he did not complain. As a herald he died, sealing his message with his blood. As a Saviour he arose, commanding an age-long, world-wide advocacy of the teaching precisely for which he had suffered. Such is the presentation.

There is a difference between stubbornness and continuity of purpose. One might indeed die out of sheer stubbornness, and in the eyes of a dwindling circle of disciples have a martyr's halo. Stubbornness is unreasoning and is mixed with bad temper. In the presentation of Jesus there is nothing to suggest either the unreason or the temper. On the contrary, there is everywhere the suggestion of a wonderfully sweet-tempered being, complaisant to the last within the limits of his code of conduct, and compassionate to the point now and again of sobs and tears. A soul under the compulsion of a high purpose, yet maintaining every possible bond of sympathy with those who are unsympathetic and unappreciative, is not obstinate, but simply brave and praiseworthy.

The presentation of Christ's continuity of will and purpose is of the indirect and quite incidental kind that we have found in other studies.

It appears on the occasion of the induction of Jesus into his public ministry at the hands of John the Baptist. When Jesus presented himself to the rugged and impassioned prophet, asking to be baptized at his hands, John attempted to dissuade him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" The answer came promptly and effectually, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it is becoming to us to do whatever is right." Half commandingly, half pleadingly, the Baptist opposed him. In the original there is a strong word which the revisers have translated, "Would have hindered." However, "as John surveyed that serene form and that holy face radiant with the peace of God, his soul bowed in reverence and awe," and the positive young prophet yielded to the resolute will of one who was more than his compeer.

In the story of the temptation we have the presentation of a high purpose and of unfaltering loyalty to it. First, there is the temptation that life should be lowered to the bread level. Jesus held it up to the divine level. Though he should die, yet would he live "not by bread alone," but by every word of God. Secondly, there is the temptation to the quick and easy and spectacular way of winning. By casting himself down without hurt three or

four hundred feet from a turret of the temple over its immense retaining wall into the valley below, within sight of five hundred thousand or a million people, Jesus would have won to himself the immediate adherence of a spectacle-loving nation. Unhesitatingly he put the impulse aside in favour of the slow and obscure and painful methods of the unwelcome teacher and the rejected sufferer. Three strenuous years to win a dozen disciples! That was the Father's will and Jesus made it his programme. Thirdly, there is the military way of winning. Jesus had imperial ambitions, and on the "high mountain" of the temptation the crowns and thrones of earth appeared within his reach. "Fall down and worship me," cried Satan, "and all shall be thine." Had Jesus yielded, had he worshipped Satan in Cæsar's way, sword in hand, the world would have had—not the one who conquers sin and sorrow and wayward souls by suffering, but one more military monster of the Cæsar type. He turned from proffered crowns and thrones to take the hard and lonely way of the cross, saying, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." There is a sublimity of purpose in the story of the temptation that rises above the demands of the flesh and the ways of the

world. God and the worship of God are set over against bread and stage-plays and crowns, and the choice of Jesus is firmly fixed.

The inflexible purpose of Jesus is seen in his persistent opposition to the ruling classes and the religious sects of his time. It appears in various incidental ways, such as his treatment of the rabbinical Sabbath, neglect of hand-washings, dining with publicans and sinners, rebuking the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, convicting the Sadducees of erroneous teaching, and interfering with the temple trade.

It was contrary to the social code of the time to dine with publicans. Yet Jesus did it again and again. When censured for it he made no apology, but calmly told his élite critics that that was his way of seeking his lost sheep, and of calling sinners to repentance. There was no more crucial test of orthodoxy than the proper observance of the rabbinical Sabbath. Jesus treated both the Mosaic and the rabbinical Sabbath with remarkable freedom. On that day as on all others he did what his hand found to do, utterly regardless of the hard legalism with which his people had mistakenly attempted to hallow it. On that day it was unlawful to heal, but Jesus healed and justified himself by putting the demands

of mercy above such laws as came from far-away tribal times. In a quite disturbing way he said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." In this he claimed equality with God, and also asserted that there is a sense in which the Father never rests, his days being altogether working days. Nothing could have enraged the Jews more than this. Esteeming it right to so do and teach in the face of their terrible zeal, Jesus unfalteringly did it.

The Apostle John, in the ninth chapter of his gospel, has taken pains to present the sharp contravention between the teaching of the Pharisees and the conduct of Jesus relative to the Sabbath. Jesus had healed a blind man on the Sabbath. Face to face with that miracle of beneficence the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath." On the other hand, the man who was healed reasoned that a sinner could not do such wonderful works. The dispute was prolonged, and the man, fairly browbeaten by those hard legalists, was at last cast out of the synagogue by them. Having thus disgraced and disowned the unfortunate one they cried, "Give God the glory; we know that this man is a sinner." In disgracing the man they were striking at Jesus. The blow was the direst they could inflict at that time and it was a

warning to him of an impending penalty. Jesus, however, interested himself not in their ravings and threatenings, but in comforting the outcast whom he had healed and in winning his faith. He spoke not a syllable of regret, but falling into a judicial mood, gave utterance to the startling paradox, "I am come that they who see not may see and that they who see may become blind."

Reference has been made in a previous chapter to the Messianic expectancy and ideals of the Jews of the first century. Here it will be sufficient to say that for generations the Jews had been looking for the one promised from God, anointed as their king, and "mightier than Moses." In imagination they clothed him with kingliness, placed him upon the throne of David, and made him their victorious military hero. They foresaw in him a career more glorious than that of Judas Maccabæus, or Cyrus, or Cæsar. He was to make Jerusalem the centre of an empire outrivalling Rome. He was to have "Nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." He was to "break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 2.

But Christ's view of the Messianic kingdom was antipodal to all this. He refused the

crown and the sword. In a critical hour he disarmed the would-be captain of his little company. He sought to quell that impotent rage against Rome which he might have inflamed with a word. He said, "I am not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." He chose for his companions and disciples a few small captains of industry. He went about teaching and healing, befriending the poor, warning the rich, manifesting a heart of catholic love and condemning the holy hatred inspired by the rabbi and cultivated by the Pharisee. Against the fond fancy of a kingdom of the sword he put the sweet, stern ideal of the kingdom of the mustard seed; of the leaven; of the hidden treasure; of the long sought jewel; of the sower; of the fish-net; of the wise virgins, and the Good Samaritan. He told Pilate that he was king of the truth, and the haughty Roman answered with an interrogatory sneer, while furious Jews were demanding his death. Never were two ideals set more directly the one against the other, and never was the opposition more deadly. It was a nation and a nation's thought against one man and his thought. The strong-willed young man answered with his life, and with a wail of sorrow for the city and the people that rejected him. He died in self-consistency rather

than yield his convictions, forego his plans, or abate a syllable of his teaching.

The presentation carries us beyond his death to his resurrection and commission. Death made in him no difference. His commission is in perfect keeping with all that goes before. He cried to his disciples, "Go teach all nations!" That was the great Teacher's teaching plan for the world's help. No kingdom of the sword would he have, but a kingdom of truth and love and loyalty; of the teacher, the brother, and the friend. Such a Messianic programme was to the Jews entirely new and unwelcome and revolutionary. And Jesus knew this quite as well as they, and in Gethsemane, and on Golgotha he paid the price. Such is the presentation in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Can such lofty and original ideals, such unyielding maintenance of them, such consistency of purpose—can such a lone-handed moral and spiritual battle against a dying age have been conceived as a fiction and thrown into literary form by that same dying age?

This characteristic in Christ has a rich devotional value for us. We must not think of it as hard and cold and distant. We are not confronted here by a frosty form, or an icy regularity. Rather it is ardent devotion to a divine ideal. Though the will of Jesus was

unbending, it was warm and sweet and tenderly human. It was touched by sympathy; it was made ardent by devotion; it was wrapped in consecration.

The will of Jesus sought to express itself in forms of prayer rather than in forms of law. The crown of loyalty to truth was never more devoutly worn than in the garden of Gethsemane. "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." And again: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." And again, turning in sorrow from his sleeping disciples, he "prayed the third time, saying the same words." Then he was strong, and could say, "Rise, let us be going; behold, the hand that doth betray me." Thus his purpose was braced by prayer, made tender by tears, and kept quite to our human needs, yet raised aloft and rendered one with the will of God.

In a style of regnancy all his own, Jesus stood before Pilate and confessed that he was King; that he was King in the realm of truth. Accused, beaten, bleeding, thorn-crowned, yet calm, consistent, brave, unyielding, the world sees him reigning in its realm of truth. *We* see him thus. In his reign we see redemption, and possessing him we possess the re-

demption that is in him. His cross is the final expression of his kingliness, while his life breathed out in prayer is the final expression of his kindliness. His blood is the symbol of the whole blessed, terrible tragedy of the truth, and we are washed therein by entering into the tragedy of truth with him, and walking there in our small way, yet arm in arm with him.

"He hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

X

HARMONIES

"O Love, O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one;
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noon-day sun."

"IN Jesus Christ all contradictions are harmonized." This is one of the suggestive sayings of Pascal. It is a startling paradox. Can contradictions be harmonized?

Pascal is speaking of contradictions in the Scriptures, or what he calls contradictions, and his meaning is that they find their unities in Christ, the Old Testament anticipating him, the New Testament presenting him. Quite boldly the paradox may be used of the conflicting features in the presentation of the character Christ. In Christ the Psalmist's ideal has been realized:

"Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Such "meeting together" and "kissing each other," of divergent, and even of conflicting, characteristics, is found in perfection only in the highest and best balanced characters. The man of small character is ever in danger of being, or of becoming, an ill-balanced extremist. His small house affords no room for the residence together of many great traits. On the contrary, the great and well-balanced soul acts as an umpire over the most distinctive and opposing properties that weave themselves into character. In white light all lights unite. Well-balanced characters are rare. Perfect balance is more than human. Enthusiasm easily runs to extremes. The orator insists on his hyperboles, the poet on his metaphors, and the artist on his "riot of colours." The apostle, the reformer, the advocate, is prone to overreach. The ruler too easily becomes a despot, and the man of wealth an oppressor of the poor. The philanthropist, leaning to mercy, forgets justice, while the judge of rigid constructions is merciless. On every hand extremes invite, and on every hand society imposes restraints. One feels that the aged Bishop Myriel in Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables," is too forgiving, if such a thing can be. But one is sure that Javert is too good a policeman. He is the law incarnate, cold,

heartless, fearless, persistent, such a terror to criminals as to be repugnant to good men, a human bloodhound. Victor Hugo has sketched for us the extremes and has made them irreconcilable.

But in Christ love resides with justice—love the highest, justice the truest. The characteristic of love in Christ has been treated in a previous chapter. There it was claimed that love is fundamental to the character Christ and to the kingdom established in his name. No one can read the gospels without feeling the presence and the predominance of this feature in their presentation. So pronounced is it that we are prone to present it with an overplus of emphasis, obscuring thus other features of the character. Popularly understood, such terms as gentleness, meekness, kindliness, and forgiveness are other names for it. This over-emphasis has reduced the character in the minds of many to a seemingly quite feminine one.

But there, side by side with love, is justice, virile and rugged and commanding. Love in Jesus never degenerates into a weak sentimentality in favour of the wilfully wicked and unrepentant. Justice holds her own in hand as he faces the narrow nationalism of his time, the hard sectarianism, and the wide-spread

spirit of revenge. Out of his sense of justice there came his warnings to the unrepentant, his woes upon such unheeding cities as Bethsaida and Chorazin, and the doom he foresaw and pronounced on Jerusalem and the nation.

But justice does not exhaust itself in pronouncements of woe and doom. It changes its expression with changing conditions. The cry from the cross, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do," is a cry that springs quite as much from the sense of justice as from the heart of love, since it is not just to mete out the same doom to the ignorant and the knowing. One may not be able to say how much of a consideration the ignorant deserves for his ignorance, but however that may be, Jesus in his dying moments recognized the justice of such consideration. While therefore the intercession on the cross is the cry of a pitying heart, it is also a protest against putting the knowing and the unknowing in the same category of blameworthiness.

Again, Jesus is represented as having emphasized the exceeding sinfulness of sin while loving the sinner. We, on the contrary, are inclined to hate the sinner in proportion as we hate the sin, and to condone the sin if we like the sinner. No one has ever made sin appear so hideous as Jesus, both by his radi-

ant life and his rigid precepts; nor has any one ever held the sinner in such high regard and dealt so compassionately with him in the moment of his repentance.

Unfortunately distance grows between culture and crudity, and quite as much on the part of the cultured one as the crude one. This is true of holiness and sin, and of the holy one and the sinful one. But in Jesus sinlessness and sympathy coincide. Somehow this sinless one still loves and seeks the sinner, and the sinner who would shun the ordinary saint draws near to him and finds in him a friend. This is the more noteworthy in view of the fact that the sinner received such cold consideration among the people of Palestine in the days of the story of Jesus. Sinners were at once and contemptuously classed as outcasts. No systematic effort was made for their reformation. The courts were penal courts, and not reformatory ones. The rabbi and the Pharisee judged ceremonial trifles with amazing harshness, and held themselves quite aloof from those who were less righteous than they. The lines were rigidly drawn between the clean and the unclean, and the hem of the Pharisee's robe must not touch that of the sinner. Pharisee Simon expressed the whole spirit of the age when he censured Christ, say-

ing, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is, for she is a sinner." He and his age took it as a cold matter of course that a prophet would detect the sinner and have nothing to do with her. But this was not the spirit of Jesus. He saw the sin, blacker and more dreadful than Pharisee Simon could see it, but he saw also what Simon did not see at all; he saw the woman's crushed life, in which there was still room for faith, and love, and repentance; her sins washed by her own tears; her new life, radiant with a new light; and he said to her, "Woman, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Again, Jesus is presented as holy, yet in his holiness there is no impracticable asceticism or mysticism. His is no mere holiness cult with assumed superiority, boastful blessedness, mystical fervour, and spiritual elevation above all sin levels! He is no hermit, but a man among men. No monk of the wilderness, but a resident of thronging Galilee, with various groups of friends, boon companions, devoted disciples, a physician to the sick, a teacher of the simple, a lover of lilies and birds and mountains and seasides.

The presentation of the miraculous in the character Christ furnishes an incisive test of

the argument in hand. In a matter-of-fact way miracles are reported of him as though they were matters of fact with him. In the records there is perfect verisimilitude. There is no elaboration, no heightening, no straining after effect. The miracle worker is as free from ostentation on the one hand as he is from tragic effort on the other. His miracles are wrought on the call of beneficence, and never for display. On the contrary, he refused to "show a sign" on demand, and took occasion to rebuke those who were the merest of shallow sign-seekers. He, the miracle worker, never wrought a miracle simply to show that he could work a miracle. He was entirely too genuine for that. He rather sought to suppress the undue notoriety that the reports of his miracles were creating, and seemed instinctively to shrink from being known as a wonder worker. The presentation is that his own emphasis was placed not on the miracles but on his teaching and his life. This appears in his sharp reply to the Pharisees who demanded a sign of him. He called them "an evil generation," and declared that no sign should be given them but the sign of Jonah the prophet, at whose preaching the Ninevites repented. The almost perfect winnowedness of the recorded miracles in their character of

beneficence, or of didactic value; their freedom from magic and pomp; the very parsimony of them relative to the sum total of recorded activities—all this is the presentation to us of power as admirably balanced by sanity and restraint as it is great and wonderful.

One other feature of the presentation of the miraculous relative to Jesus deserves mention. The gospel miracles are miracles; they are not freaks. The noted scientist who declared that no amount of evidence could convince him that "a minotaur had been seen trotting down the Strand in London" failed to distinguish between a miracle and a freak. That is an unfortunate blunder for a man of science to make. The miracle has its due occasion, its beneficent or didactic value, its close kinship with psychical and ethical forces, and its rational place in the economy of theistic thought. None of these categories apply to the changing of a pen into a pen-wiper, or the hypothetical minotaur trotting down the Strand in London. Such freaks, or signs, or others quite like them, might have pleased the ancient sign-seekers more by far than the beneficent works that sprang as naturally from the kindly soul of Luke's and John's and Matthew's hero as water from a fountain. It

is highly significant that with such signs that hero would have nothing to do.

Not in the miracles alone, but in other ways divine power and authority are attributed to Jesus. In the exercise of these gifts there is no coercion of individual freedom, no submerging of the individual conscience, no blocking of our human initiative, no scotching of our humble human achievements. Jesus alone of the world's great leaders harmonized his kingly claims with the rightful liberty of his subjects. Authority and slavery were the governmental correlatives of the ancient world; the authority of the monarch presupposed the slavery of his subjects. It was so in Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome. Democracies were shortlived. They were the fitful expressions of the freedom and equality that are native to humanity, but which were soon lost under the sceptre of the monarch and the sword of the conqueror. On the contrary, the authority claimed by Jesus is greater than that of any earthly monarch, while his method of wielding it assured the freedom and goodwill of his subjects. He seeks to develop rather than to suppress personality, and constantly to transmute his lordship into friendship. The adjustment of claim and command in Matt. 28: 18 and 19, is very significant; "All au-

thority in heaven and on earth is given to me. Go teach all nations!" With Jesus teaching is the correlative of authority, and its method. Thus his kingdom becomes the kingdom of the church, the school, the college, the university; of enlightenment, neighbourliness, and brotherliness.

To create a sinless character under the most strenuous and trying conditions of life would have been in itself a marvel of marvels for the period in which the gospels were produced. To create in such an age a character that commends itself to after ages as sinless is wonderful indeed. Now that is precisely what appears on the pages of the gospels. The character Christ is presented as free from the cramping legalism of the day and from many a distinctive but merely ethnic feature of Judaism. To our age it is astonishing to see how splendidly the Christ rises above the ceremonial trifling of his time, the hand-washings, and Sabbaths, and fastings, and tithings, and rabbinical distinctions, and priestly pretensions, and even the temple cult, with its holocausts of animals and rivers of blood. What a *tour de force* of fiction it would be to create such a character in such an age, at once making it a protest and giving it ascendency, and by very virtue of its break with the times com-

mending it to after times! Here, however, is the fact; here is the character, pronounced sinless by the centuries, and yet free from the precise legalism and traditionalism which in that age constituted sinlessness.

A further presentation is that in Christ's person God-like ideals have their home in human perfections, and that thus the seemingly irreconcilable human and divine are made one. "The Word was made flesh," says John, in his profoundly meditative statement of the incarnation. And the glory that he had observed in Christ as a man he could liken to nothing less than "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And thus in the mind of the aged apostle there was wrought out in Christ the long sought reconciliation between flesh and spirit, God and man.

In Christ the contradictions between life and death meet and are harmonized in the resurrection, and the fear of death gives place to the hope of life. His resurrection is the fond assertion that

> "Life is ever Lord of Death,
> And Love can never lose its own."

In his life and its measureless activities; in his death and its abysses of sorrow and love

and forgiveness; in his resurrection and its triumphs over death and despair; in his plans for an empire of the teacher, the brother, the friend, and the redeemer, there are such ideals matched by such realities as have compelled the world to make a new category. The God, the man, in him, are one and unique. Our Brother is our Deity, and we worship him in close, familiar love.

Let it be repeated, the writer of fiction who can create thus must be greater than Milton or Dante, Victor Hugo or Shakespeare, Goethe or Schiller, or Tennyson or Browning. These are geniuses in the world of creative literature. Their amazing capabilities were devoted to literature. They were the sons of a Christian civilization. They breathed an atmosphere of Christian idealism. The pages of Luke and John were in their hands, and the form of Jesus passed before them. But withal they have created no character comparable to Christ; they have realized for us no ideal even remotely approaching that of Matthew and Mark. Are we then to believe that men untrained in literature, without creative genius as their pages plainly show, humble Jews of the Galilean lake, tax-gatherers, peasants, provincial men, children of that cramped and Pharisaical first century, . . . are we to be-

lieve that they created this character, threw it up in mighty, God-like protest against their own times, and projected it as a tremendous reality, a transforming dynamic, into waiting centuries? Did they deceive their own times and the centuries that followed with the hypothesis of a reality that never existed? And by such a hypothesis merely of idealized but unrealized glory, power, and protest, have they reformed abuses, transformed the centuries, and created civilizations? Causes must be, even in literature and history, adequate to their effects. The character Christ and the Christian dynamic of our Anno Domini centuries must be accounted for. Our heads and our hearts at their best refuse to consent that the peasants of Galilee are a sufficient explanation for this measureless effect. In the name of literature and history reason cries out for Christ, for the real Christ, the Son of the living God, the gift of the Father's love.

Evidently the choicest souls that gathered around Jesus in the days when he taught and loved and wrought in universal ways, felt that there was a strange and potential difference between him and their other great ones. They struggled to know him. They could not at once comprehend him. In their perplexity they loved him. Before his

day was half done they had travelled so far with him that they could not turn back. The thought of it was terrible. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." When his day was done they revered his memory; they received his spirit; they obeyed his commandment; they bowed their knees to him; they lifted up their hearts, and went forth to live and die telling his story, the story of

"The far Father in the close, sweet Son."

XI

FINALITY

"We faintly hear, we dimly see;
In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in Thee,
The Light, the Truth, the Way."

"HIS thought after two thousand years needs no revision." It is to Dr. George A. Gordon that we owe this observation. It suggests much. Ordinarily we esteem him the greatest teacher who constantly revises his matter and his presentation. Such revision is a condition of progress.

"We rise on stepping stones
Of our dead selves to higher things."

Jesus, however, was able to speak the final word, and yet leave room for growth on the part of his disciples. We are far removed from the Galilean fishermen, but the message to them is still the message to us.

"No fable old, no mythic lore;
No dream of bards and seers;
No dead fact stranded on the shore
Of the oblivious years;

"But warm, sweet, tender—even yet
A present help is he;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."

As the character Christ is unrivalled, so his revelation is ultimate. The stamp of finality is everywhere on the sayings and doings of this wonderful One. In rapture it was written of him that he was "The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." In our critical age, looking through much cold light, we still speak of him in the same rapturous terms. He did not simply speak God's last, best, word to men; he is that word. The prologue to the fourth gospel so presents him. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." In substance the synoptic gospels say the same. Not one of them leaves room for an expectancy higher than is realized in its pages. Such is the presentation.

In the sciences and arts there are fundamental facts and principles upon which we build, which we cannot change, and beyond the application of which we cannot go. In mathematics the axioms are fundamental. In music there are harmonies that must be honoured.

Chemistry has her reagents, botany her science of numbers, the stars their orbits, and geology her vast and impenetrable periods. In religion the world waited long for one who should find what is fundamental, and who should winnow it out from the mass of the accidental, and give to it expression in simple words and immortal deeds.

That finality should be found in religion and ethics, or even an approach to it, is the more wonderful when we remember the numerous, world-old and age-long attempts and failures. Religions are as numerous as the races of men. They change with changing times. There are fashions in forms of worship that are mistaken for essentials of the spiritual life. Creeds and cults come and go carrying bane or blessing to countless thousands of their devotees.

> "Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, O God, art more than they."

But to find this God, and his final, fundamental will and way, this has been the mocking quest of countless centuries. "Who by searching can find out God?" "What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer."

To Christ is attributed final, fundamental thought about God, not in philosophic ways maybe, but in ethical and spiritual and dynamic ones. Building on the best type of monotheism of the ancient world, that of the Hebrew prophets, he passes beyond it and presents us with a better monotheism. The monarchical monotheism of the Old Testament gives place to the paternal monotheism of the words and the spirit of Jesus. God as Jesus reveals him is not a ruler merely, a monarch, a supreme judge, and autocrat, whose will, however righteous, is yet so cold and inflexible as to reduce his people to subjects rather than develop them into citizens. Nor is he "a Man of war," nor does he command the destruction of tribes or peoples, nor does he rejoice in the overthrow of the enemies of his chosen ones. There is much of the Old Testament thought about God that is never repeated by Jesus. To him God is personal Spirit, and he is Father.

This Father who is Spirit cannot be localized or monopolized. The answer to the woman at the well in Samaria is marvellous both in its spiritual insight and in its constructive daring. "Our fathers worshipped God in this mountain," said the woman; "ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men

ought to worship." A local God with a local shrine was in her thoughts, and in the thoughts of her people, and of his. But Jesus in his answer rose immeasurably above all the thought of the time. He said, " the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem worship the Father. The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." In this one saying Jesus forever delocalized and universalized the worship of the God who is Spirit and who is Father. It was a saying that involved great danger, first to the one who uttered it, then to the local altars. It involved also tremendous changes, for the worship of the whole world through all time. Can our thought rise higher than this? Can we conceive of any one better or beyond the Personal Spirit who dwells in his world, making every foot of soil a place of prayer? Who also is Father with all that this term of endearment implies of love and providence and chastisement and forgiveness?

Christ's thought about God is discoverable in his acts quite as distinctly as in his words. He went to the temple not to sacrifice an ox or

a lamb, but to drive out the extortionate traders. There was more true worship of the Father-God in his lash for thieves than in the river of blood that flowed from the altar to the valley below. He would not allow that his Father's house should be a house of hard bargains, extortionate prices, and ill-gotten gains.

The attitude of Jesus toward the sects of his time sprang from his thought about God. Phariseeism, Sadduceeism, Rabbinism were out of keeping with a Father's kingdom in which men should be brothers.

His view of God made it incumbent on Jesus to be "the Prince of Peace." In the Father's kingdom there should be no war. Consistently therefore Jesus refused to take the sword or allow his disciples to do so. Can there be a more beneficent or dynamic thought about God than that which issues in a kingdom of human fraternity, justice, helpfulness, and peace? For practical, efficient, social goodness is not Christ's disclosure of God the final one?

The term "Father" as used by Jesus stands for personality and love and providence. It conditions our kinship with the object of our worship, calling for sonship, childhood, and loyalty based on love. In the matter of personal relations we cannot go beyond it, and

we have learned that we dare not fall below it. Now and then a prophet of the ancient times thought of God as Father, but in a far-off, poetic way. With Jesus the term is central to his disclosure of God. It is final and fundamental. It is constructive. It is foundation and turret and dome to his spiritual temple. Does he speak of a kingdom? It is the Father's kingdom. Of love? It is the Father's love. Of justice? It is the Father's justice? Of providence? It is the Father's providence. And so of all his teaching, while his practice is such that in his unfailing brotherliness he manifests the Father's fatherliness. "No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The fatherhood of God is the full secret of Christ's presence in the world as Son. By his own wise, brave, and unfaltering brotherliness toward men he has revealed to us the highest, kindliest, and most vital relationship that can prevail between the Creator and his created ones. With Jesus the term Father as applied to God is the final theological term, the final ethical one, and the final sacramental one. That is to say, this term was meant by Jesus to condition our thought about God, our relationship to him, and our worship of him.

Christ's thought about man is a direct corollary of his thought about God. If God is the Father man is the child. If one man is the child of God so is another; so are all. The broadly human family becomes the humanly divine one. There springs from this the conception of a universal brotherhood, a world-wide neighbourhood, an all-embracing manhood. To this conception the Golden Rule becomes the logical code of conduct, since it is simply the way of fraternal relations, while the law of the other cheek is simply the way of a real brother with a real brother. The act of the compassionate Samaritan is the way of a brother who is up with the one who is down. In a word, this final, fundamental kinship is the source of the ethics of the mountain sermon, of the precepts, the parables, and the prayers of Jesus.

In this Jesus is not only consistent, but he has the advantage also of reverting to the noble thought about man presented in the first pages of the Old Testament. There is this difference, however, in favour of Jesus. He makes the thought central and constructive for all men, whereas the Old Testament writers and lawgivers failed to apply it broadly to their own people, not to speak of other peoples, which, in the long run, they

learned to despise. With Jesus the thought works itself out into the broadest groupings of men, schools, churches, federations, parliaments, arbitrations, democracies, republics, and international relations fraternally conditioned. Can we in thought go deeper than this? Is it not final? Is not our only difficulty found in its limitless applications to the affairs of life, and its multitudinous bearings on conduct? Is it not this that makes sectarianism illogical, and repugnant, and unethical? And is it not this that is urging us to seek the higher ethics of Christian union, the ethics of a united family under the one Fatherhood? Can there be a higher thought about man than that which makes him a child of the eternal Father, and a brother to his undying brother, and that inspires every possible beneficence on the one hand, coupled with every possible insurgency against evil on the other?

If a panegyric of humankind had been intended, nothing higher could have been offered than the capabilities and possibilities that Jesus imputes to man. But it is not eulogy with which Jesus is dealing; it is stern, and intense, and almost dreadful reality. He invests man with possibilities of victory over sin, of the attainment of holiness, and of eternal life.

The seriousness, the greatness, the sweetness, the possible tragedy of life that is like God, and that is related to him in filial ways—it was all this that impressed Jesus, and regarding it all he has spoken words that cannot be surpassed or forgotten.

In his thought about life and duty Jesus reaches finality in his valuation of the motive rather than the form. With him the inner, not the outer, is paramount. Right intention Godward issuing in reverence; right intention manward issuing in beneficence, these are the poles about which he would have the life revolve. Of legislation there is from Jesus almost nothing; of inspiration there is almost all. Forms, ceremonies, legalities, technicalities, he left to those who trifle in religion and ethics. To those who are serious he presented ideals, motives, purposes, and affections. He discarded the thousand burdensome rules of the rabbis, the deadening forms of the Pharisees, and the laborious cult of the Old Testament times. For these he substituted the simplest, quickest, easiest, everywhere usable ways of worshipping. He made worship to consist not of motions but of emotions. In his presence rituals and sacraments, forms and formalities recede; reverence and love, benevolence and beneficence gain access.

He sought to make worship a joy and life a delight. Who that knows him as the gospels present him can think of pleasing him by flagellation, or sleeping on spikes, or making pilgrimages, or imprisoning himself in a monastery, or by nice distinctions in the cut of a chasuble, or by the presence or absence of leaven in a loaf? It was never his thought that his disciples should be miserable and legalistic and small and cynical here in order to be happy and free and great and gracious hereafter. In a most sacred hour he gave a final, all but blood-sealed, passionate, exhortation to his disciples; a new commandment inclusive of all the old ones that were worth keeping; "*that ye love one another.*" That was his summary of religion in manward ways just as the love of the Father in heaven was his summary of it in Godward ways.

This that is final in Christ, and the source of finality in his teaching, is the secret of the satisfaction he has bestowed on unnumbered myriads of men. His invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," is at once the kindliest call and the fullest assurance that have ever been given to the souls of men. It is the ultimate door thrown wide to men by the Son of Man.

If we do not find finality in Christ where shall we find it? Who can suggest a step beyond the pathway he has trodden? Who can put a better, sweeter thought about God into any heart that is human, or devise a more brotherly relationship between travellers on life's rough road, or inspire men with a holier hope for this world of time and the timeless world?

"O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee.
See the Christ stand."

Is it necessary still to raise the now familiar question as to fact or fiction? What kind of illumination fell at once on Luke the Greek physician, Matthew the publican, John the mystic, and Mark the unimaginative pragmatist, that they four should unite in presenting to the world's fondest faith such a conquering picture of their combined fancy? Or if these four names are but symbols for the four little books, the question is the same. Galilean peasants and a Greek doctor—they four or any other unknown four, the problem is the same; how came they to strike these

notes of finality? To present a body of spiritual and ethical teaching that can be revised only by being marred? To present such thoughts about God and man as were wholly repugnant to their own age while increasingly attractive to all future ones? To incarnate these thoughts in a character supreme, make them vital in the picture of a person morally miraculous, seal them to succeeding centuries by a most vivid tragedy of crucifixion and resurrection? How came these four by this miracle of literary creation, for such it must be if Christ himself be not the reality that is claimed for him by these same humble or unknown four? Surely this miracle of presentation springs more easily and rationally from the fountain of reality in One, and that One the gift of God, than from the divergent and untrained fancies of the average sons of an unimaginative and crabbed age. The easier faith is that the "Strong Son of God" by a painful process during many months tore these average sons of their times away from their times, and made them by his pre-eminence over them both competent and glad to tell in their simple ways his story sublime.

EXCURSUS I

CHRIST AND OTHER FOUNDERS*

"To Him, from wanderings long and wild,
I come, an over-wearied child,
In cool and shade His peace to find,
Like dew-fall settling on my mind.
I turn from Fancy's cloud-built scheme,
Dark creed and mournful eastern dream
Of power, impersonal and cold,
Controlling all, itself controlled,
Maker and slave of iron laws,
Alike the subject and the cause;
From vain philosophies that try
The seven-fold gates of mystery,
And, baffled ever, babble still,
Word-prodigal of fate and will;
From Nature, and her mockery Art,
And book and speech of men apart,
To the still witness in my heart;
With reverence waiting to behold
His Avatar of love untold,
The Eternal Beauty new and old."

—*Whittier.*

CHRIST stands alone. He is a fact apart, a phenomenon unequalled, a manifestation without a second. He is man and super-man. He touches all, yet he

* For the introduction of this theme see Chapter I, p. 29.

is above all. Through perfect manhood he rises into Godhood. Religion at its best refuses to be satisfied with exclusively human categories relative to him. His character, his claims, and his effects are unique. Literature, art, civilization, and centuries rise up to do him reverence. Schools find their inspiration in him, laws their equity, parliaments their permanence, and souls their rest. Through him God speaks; in him man hopes.

In a lonely hour, on the slopes of Mount Hermon, not far from Cæsarea Philippi, he called for the confession of his school of young men. Reverently the foremost of them said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Benediction followed confession. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee that thou art *Petros,* and upon this *petra* I will build my church." With this happy play on the name of his ardent disciple he declared himself a future builder.

The great founders of religions aside from Jesus are Moses, Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed. Not one of them has presented to the world such claims either God-ward or man-ward as those of Christ. Confucius did not so much as claim a religious message.

Buddha presented a pantheistically conditioned one. Neither made any prophetic claims as messengers for or from God. Moses and Mohammed presented themselves as prophets from God speaking the messages of God. Christ presents himself in vital relationship with God, a relationship which he describes in terms of sonship and fatherhood. He makes this vital kinship with God the medium of his full and final revelation of God. Christ is Deity expressed in terms of humanity.

Such claims were never made for Moses, and had he made them for himself he would have been held guilty of blasphemy by both the earlier and later prophets of the religion that he founded. He is represented as conscious of his own limitations, and as having had a forecast of one greater than himself whom "the Lord would raise up," and whom the people should hear "in all things whatsoever he should say unto them." Mohammed, misguided by the cold and harsh and speculative forms of Christianity with which he came into contact, revolted from the thought of such vital relationship between God and Christ, and to this day Mohammedans teach that the claim of such kinship is the most heinous of sins, the sin of "Shirk."

Christ's man-ward claims are precisely in keeping with his God-ward ones. More frequently than by any other term he calls himself "the Son of Man." He heals and helps, invites and warns and forgives, reconciles and commands and judges. He is at once Brother and Redeemer. He is slain Lamb and risen Lord. He is the revelation of God to man and of man to himself. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Neither Moses nor Mohammed bears any such relationship to mankind. Jesus was a man among men and a man above men; they are merely men among men. Neither is wholly exemplary; neither is typal; both are far from it. Both were legislators according to the primitive needs of their respective periods and peoples. From neither did there come an evangelical message, a call to repentance or a promise of forgiveness. On the contrary, both imposed severe penalties for the transgression of their hard codes. Moses and Mohammed were soldiers, fierce and terrible. Jesus refused the sword, disarmed his disciples, and stands as the Prince of Peace to all the earth. They slaughtered: Christ saves. They legislated: he loves. They built in ethnic and limited ways: he, in catholic and unlim-

ited ones. Pascal exclaimed, "Moses for a people; Christ for the world." The exclamation fits Mohammed also, for his work is characterized by limitations similar to those of Moses.

One feels a glowing admiration for Confucius. Serious and serene, wise for his times and beyond his times, towering above his fellows, a marvel, and a teacher to a hundred generations of his own teeming millions, he commands reverence—almost. In comparison with Jesus, however, his limitations are at once apparent. He did not claim to be a religious teacher at all; rather, he distinctly disclaimed it. He preferred not to talk about the gods. His theory was that we cannot as yet perform our duties toward men, and until we can we should not trouble ourselves about spirits. He was intensely practical and the whole emphasis of his teaching rests on temporal things. Like the people to whom he ministered he was "singularly devoid of imagination and indisposed to philosophy." He claimed no message from above and was not conscious of any merit beyond that of the human level. Propriety was his watchword, and the superior man his ideal. All our Christian categories relative to conversion and the new life were foreign to him. It is no

injustice to call him the Solomon, or the Benjamin Franklin, of China. He called himself a transmitter, and his mission was to gather up the wisdom of the ancients and pass it on to others. He was a traditionalist. He set the face of China toward the past, and blocked whatever wheels of progress she may have had. Christ, on the contrary, was the world's mightiest prophet of progress. He gauged his age as one of transition; he boldly announced the approaching end of the dead or dying past, and resolutely set the face of his disciples toward a boundless future. Confucius stereotyped China; Jesus emancipated the world.

Confucius misgauged man. He assumed that man is naturally good, and that if unobstructed he will surely reach, like a river, his goal. From this it followed that what man needed was simply the open way of just laws, righteous rulers, good government, and in a word, proper environment. He had no vision of sin. He could not see that the heart needed to be made right, or that men can possibly be evil by choice. His theory was that the bucket conditioned the water that it held. If the bucket were clean the water would be wholesome. If the bucket were foul the water would be bad. This is why he cared nothing

for religion and everything for law and politics and government. He was a thoroughgoing externalist. The more spiritually-minded Lao Tze discovered this and made light of it, bidding him observe that the crow does not paint himself all day in order to be black or the pigeon to be white. Confucius saw the body and its needs, the family and its needs, the community and its needs, the state and its needs, but not the soul and its needs. That, on the contrary, is precisely what Jesus saw first, and upon that he placed his first emphasis. Jesus had a perfectly clear vision of sin and holiness and of their radical differences. He knew the values of the inner states of man, of right- and wrong-mindedness, of struggle and abandonment, of repentance and forgiveness, of churlishness and neighbourliness, of profanity and prayer. Jesus, therefore, directed his life and teaching to the correction and perfection of these inner states of man, leaving the corrected man to frame his own laws, build his own constitutions, and direct his own governments. The contrast is sharp between Christ's method of inwardness and the Confucian method of outwardness.

The beautiful story and attractive life of Buddha must not blind us to his limitations and his misdirections. One cannot say of him

as Renan says of Jesus that "his legend will grow young with years," but one can say that it has charmed the thoughts of many generations. Buddha the compassionate is revered by millions to-day though he came and went two millenniums and a half ago. Buddha loved, or at least he pitied, and therefore he lives in the memories of men. He did not claim a revelation, but a struggle and a triumph. Having made his well-known "great renunciation" he went forth clothed in a yellow robe with a beggar's rice bowl in his hand, seeking the light. As a begging monk he sought. He starved his body that his soul might see. He reduced his food to three grains of rice a day. Failing, he abandoned that hard way, and was reviled by the monks from whom he parted. Still he sought. After long meditation amidst the silent shades of a sacred Bo-tree the light dawned on him, and at once he became a Buddha, that is an enlightened one. Undecided at first as to whether he should preach or not, he at last determined "to beat the drum of the eternal in the darkness of this world." Thus he became a preacher, gathered a school of monks, and founded a religion.

The light that Buddha saw is darkness indeed in comparison with the light that Jesus

revealed. He saw not sin, but sorrow; not holiness and hope, but death and despair; not repentance and forgiveness and restoration, but the extinction of desire and the pathway of nescience; not a positive heaven, but a negative nirvana; not God and goodness, but atheism and pessimism.

Gautama, for that was Buddha's family name, was the most compassionate of men. What appealed to him were the wrinkles of age, the plaints of childhood, the deficiencies of the lame and deaf and blind, the sufferings of the sick, the wretchedness of beggars, and in a word the appalling aggregate of human sorrow. He was oppressed by it. He brooded over it. In view of it he was smitten with "the divine unrest of noble souls." Out of the travail of his soul there came the light—his light. He saw that desire was the source of all unrest, and that if desire could be overcome sorrow would cease. From that moment he was "Buddha," the enlightened one, and tradition has placed these words of that first hour of his enlightenment in his mouth: "Looking for the maker of this tabernacle I have to run through a course of many births so long as I do not find him; and painful is birth again and again. But now, Maker of this tabernacle, thou hast been seen; thou shalt

not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken; thy ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, approaching the eternal, has attained the extinction of all desire."

This experience of Buddha, all too briefly told, is a miniature of his system, embracing what he termed the "Four Noble Truths." The following statement of these "noble truths" is that of Dr. Allen Menzies, in his "History of Religion," page 365.

1. "The Noble Truth of Suffering. Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering. Presence of objects we hate is suffering, separation from objects we love is suffering, not to obtain what we desire is suffering. Briefly, the fivefold clinging to existence is suffering.

2. "The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. Thirst that leads to rebirth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. This thirst is threefold, namely, thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, thirst for prosperity.

3. "The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. It ceases with the complete cessation of thirst, a cessation which consists in the absence of every passion, with the abandoning of this thirst, with the deliverance from it, with the destruction of desire.

4. "The Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering—The Holy Eightfold Path. That is to say, Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Memory, Right Meditation."

These last terms, belief, aspiration, etc., are not Christian; they are Buddhistic, and are filled each with a Buddhistic content. Right belief, for instance, is not Christian belief, but Buddhistic belief. It is belief in pain and sorrow as the great evil, and in desire as the source of that evil; in the desirability of getting rid of desire; in transmigration; in karma; in the possibility of ending both karma and the round of transmigration; and finally in Nirvana or nescience.

Buddha's doctrine of sorrow is conditioned by the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. If birth and life and death are painful, how terrible must be the prospect of eight million four hundred thousand births and deaths! "The essential doctrine of Buddha," says Professor Menzies, "is determined by the belief in transmigration. His cry of triumph at the time of his enlightenment is to the effect that the long series of suffering existences through which he has passed has now come to an end, and that he will not be born again."

Buddha's doctrine of the last things is antipodal to that of Jesus. Nirvana, whatever else it may mean, is certainly the exhaustion of the karma, the end of sequence, the quenching of desire, the sweet relapse at last into nescience. Buddhism does not teach the permanence of the ego, for the soul is "but a chance collation of elements," to be dissolved by fate or chance or conscious effort. There is no prettier presentation of this "finis and total liquidation" of the individual than Edwin Arnold frames for us in various quatrains of his fine epic, "The Light of Asia." Take this:

> "The dew is on the lotus! Rise, Great Sun!
> And lift my leaf, and mix me with the wave.
> Om, Mani, Padme Hum! The sunrise comes!
> The dewdrop slips into the shining sea."

Christ, on the other hand, allures his followers with the hope of that "Life which is ever Lord of Death," and of that "Love which can never lose his own." Wonderful were his words on the night of the last supper with his disciples: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

By way of further emphasis on the Hindu doctrine of transmigration, inherited by Buddha and accepted by him, the following paragraph from Dr. John Henry Barrows is offered: "The birth stories of Ceylon represent him as having been born five hundred and thirty times after he became a predestined Buddha. We read that he was born eighty-three times as an ascetic, forty-eight times as a monarch, forty-three times as a deva, twenty-four times as a Brahman, eighteen times as an ape; as a deer, ten; as an elephant, six; as a lion, ten; at least once each as a thief, a gambler, a frog, a hare, and a snipe. He was also embodied in a tree. But as a predestined Buddha he could not be born in hell, nor as vermin, nor as a woman. . . . He could descend no lower than a snipe."

"Many," says Dr. Barrows, "have been impressed with St. Hilaire's eulogy of Prince Siddartha; 'His life had no taint; his constant heroism equals his convictions, and, if the theory which he preconceived was false, the personal example which he gave was irreproachable.'" "And yet," continues Dr. Barrows, "since through the early years of his life he lived in what, according to his own teaching, was heinous sin, we have no historic

right to say that he takes rank with Jesus in the perfection of his holiness. Gautama, after his enlightenment, was at first undecided whether he should keep his new faith to himself or proclaim it to others. Not so Jesus. Buddha made discoveries: the Christ revealed what was from within. Buddha taught the vileness of the human body; Christ its sacredness. We can explain Buddha without the miracles which later legends ascribe to him. We cannot explain Christ, either his person or his influence, without granting the truth of his own claim that he did the supernatural works of his Father. Only his resurrection accounts for the rise and continued existence of his church. We must go to Palestine and not to India to find a perfect Man, a perfect Teacher, and the only Savior."

Thought about God ultimately conditions all thought in religion. There is, therefore, no more crucial test of religious leaders than their presentation of God. Deficiency or misdirection can be sustained at any other point better than at this. Every deficiency, every misdirection in the founder's thought about God works itself out inevitably into doctrine and worship, and life, and history. But if the founder's thought about God is great and encompassing, whole and wholesome, the re-

ligion that flows from it seeks constantly the same high level.

Judged by this standard, Buddha and Confucius are fatally defective. Neither felt the need of any god or gods. Buddha did not need God because the struggle upon which he insisted was a purely inward and personal one, a fight in a realm where, as he thought, no god could help and for salvation of a kind that no god could give. Buddhism "is the most autosoteric of all religions," says Professor Menzies. "It declares more uncompromisingly than any other that man must save himself by his own efforts, and that no one can possibly stand in his place or relieve him of any part of the great task." Buddha's last words to a favourite disciple as presented by Dr. George F. Moore, in his recent work entitled, "History of Religions," are these; "Therefore, Ananda, with yourselves for islands (of safe retreat from the overwhelming floods of desires and lusts), live ye, with yourselves for refuges: with the Teachings for an island, with the Teachings for a refuge, with naught else for a refuge." Even the pantheistic Brahma of his fathers seems to have faded away from the self-sufficient soul of Buddha, and we have from him the anomaly of a God-less religion. Being God-less,

it is, of course, devoid of all the categories of relationship between God and man that belong to theistic religions, such as love and fear, repentance and forgiveness, regeneration, justification, and reconciliation.

"He breathes," says Dr. Justin Hartly Moore, "no revenge for disobedience, no forgiveness for the penitent. No higher power ever whispered into his ear the secrets of eternity nor pointed out the secret place of truth. Buddha never claimed to be the messenger of any Power who dwells above this world. And if he spoke as having authority, it was the authority of experience merely, and in no wise due to inspiration or personal divinity."

Very similarly, but from a different motive, Confucius dispensed with the gods. He did not deny them; he simply did not need them and was not interested in them. His life and teachings were an essay in practical politics, and he could not see how the spirits of stones and trees, and mountains, and rivers, and of dead ancestors, plus an impersonal national deity popularly known as Shang-ti, could be of any assistance to him or his people. He left the religion of China as he found it, with this exception, namely, that he taught the fundamental ethics and morals of that religion, and contributed, therefore, indirectly to its

furtherance. What was said above of the Buddhism of Buddha must, therefore, be said also of the system of Confucius: it is devoid of all distinctly Theistic and Christian categories. "To him as to other thinkers of this type," says Professor Moore, "God was essentially the moral order of the world, an order energizing in the phenomena of nature as well as in the course of history and the destiny of individual lives." This issues in fatalism, and prayer is futile. When personality is lost from the God idea, nothing is left but the hard and relentless grind of law and order. Confucius felt this, as the following story shows: Once when he was sick his disciple, Tsze-lu, asked leave to pray for him. He said, "Is that proper?" Tsze-lu replied, "Yes, that is proper, for it is said, prayer has been made to the spirits of the upper and lower worlds." Confucius answered, "It must be a long time since I prayed."

Moses, Mohammed, and Jesus are monotheistic, but each in his own way. The monotheism of Moses is ethical and monarchical. God is the one rightful ruler of his people, and he is holy. Being holy he calls for holiness on the part of his subjects and worshippers. Hence the Decalogue with its negative ethics, and hence also other more positive

codes of the later Hebrews. Out of this thought about God sprang the age-long struggle of the prophets against polytheism and its degrading idolatries. And side by side with that heroic struggle, there sprang also the most ethically and religiously dynamic body of literature in the world aside from the New Testament. Furthermore, since God was the rightful Ruler of the people of Israel, he must reign after the fashion of the times. He must legislate, and execute; he must be "a Man of war," and lead his armies to victory; he must be present at the place and time of the centralized national worship; and as King he must have a glorious habitation, a temple that should be a palace, and a palace that should be a temple. All this we find in the Old Testament with here and there noble prophetic protests against various of its more primitive and distinctly national traits. The result was a decidedly ethnic religion with many limiting and perishable features. This lonely, noble, ancient monotheism of Moses gave at last all that was best of itself as a heritage to Christ, and much of the worst of itself as a heritage to Mohammed.

James Freeman Clarke says of the monotheism of Mohammed that it is the worst in the world. It is monarchical, legalistic, rigid,

and relentless. It is cold, distant, and deistical. The God of Mohammed is an inflexible autocrat. He is not a Father; he does not love; he cannot be called gracious, or long-suffering, or tender in mercy. He has no mercy except toward believers. To unbelievers he is brutally unmerciful, commanding their slaughter wherever they are found. Mohammedanism is a relapse from the higher teaching both of Moses and of Jesus. It demands slavish obedience on the part of its votaries, and makes them fanatical enemies of all whom they deem hateful to their God. Mohammed's God is a reflection of his own great and furious and warlike soul. Mohammed's God has drenched the earth in blood. He has retarded civilization. He has built harems and enslaved womanhood. He has conquered that he might degrade. He has blocked progress and choked life.

A treatment of the monotheism of Jesus has been presented in the chapter on "Finality." To that the reader is referred in closing this discussion, the enforced brevity of which no one can feel more than the writer. This much must be said, however, at the risk of repetition. Jesus passes beyond the legalistic and monarchical monotheism of Moses and presents us with the great and encompassing

and comforting fact of the Fatherhood of God.

It was a new day in the history of religion when Jesus made that concept fundamental and constructive. Others had dreamed of it, but the dreams had passed with their waking, warlike hours. Jesus held to it and built upon it. He taught his disciples to pray for the Father's kingdom, not for a monarch's. He inspired them to live as children, not as subjects; and as brothers, not as patricians or plebeians. When Jesus spoke it was as representing the Father; when he wrought he did the Father's works; when he suffered it was for the Father's glory; and when he died, it was to the Father he prayed in behalf of his enemies, and into the Father's hand that he committed his spirit. In all the teaching of Jesus there is not a hint of monarchical monotheism. It was because Jesus saw God as a Father that he refused to wear a crown and wield a scepter, and be such a king as David or Solomon had been. As Jesus perceived it, God preferred to love and forgive and heal and save rather than to fight and kill after the far-away tribal fashion; so Jesus himself refused the sword and accepted the cross. He insisted on being the Prince of Peace because he was the Son of the Father of all mankind. For

the same reason he pursued the method of inspiration rather than legislation, and of the educator rather than the executive. In the true family, as between father and children, law reduces itself to a minimum, and love reaches its maximum. So Jesus simply said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that you love one another."

The heaviest burden that historical Christianity has had to bear through all its centuries has been reversion, under the misguidance of Augustine and Calvin and Charlemagne and Hildebrand and Leo, to the monarchical monotheism of Moses and Mohammed. But we are returning now to the Father of Jesus and out of the return there are coming federations, democracies, peace propagandas, fraternal feelings, unity movements, rosy dawns of better days, and the blessed graves of many a heartless and unbrotherly dogma.

"Jesus Christ is in his own order," says Dr. Fairbairn, "namely, the order of the founders or creators of religions, the transcendent person of history; and to be transcendent here is to be transcendent everywhere, for religion is the supreme factor in the organizing and regulating of our personal and collective life."

Dr. Fairbairn pushes this matter of the

transcendency of Jesus some steps further. He even affirms that Christ created monotheism. No weightier sentences than his could be quoted in concluding this chapter. He says of Jesus, " He is the real Creator of Monotheism. Before and apart from him we have Naturalisms, Polytheisms, Pantheisms, and a Henotheism, which is the term most characteristic of Judaism as it was and is. But it is only through him, and within Christendom that Monotheism has come to be and has been incorporated in a real and a realized religion.

" He created a religion in its own order as transcendent as his person, and its order is the universal and ethical. The one God has his correlative and counterpart in the one religion, and in its character the religion could not but be as was the God; and as were the God and the religion, so did they design man to be. By making God a new being to man, man was made a new being for the service of God."

EXCURSUS II

PREVAILING IDEALS OF THE TIMES OF JESUS

"What precisely did Christ, by his ideas and the condition of their realization, accomplish for religion? It is a small thing to say, He made a universal religion possible; it is a greater thing to add, The religion he made possible is one that ought to be universal, for its ideal is the humanest, and the most beneficent that has ever come to man."—*Fairbairn.*

THE Messianic ideals of the Jews of the first century have been referred to more than once in the preceding pages. In a broad way it has been shown that the Christ ideal of the gospels is in striking contrast with the thoughts and ideals of the time, and radically antagonistic to the fondest anticipations of the time. A further study of this feature of the work seems advisable, especially in behalf of those who have not the opportunity to read widely on the subject.

There are four especially valuable indices of the spirit of the times, namely the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, the pre-Christian Apocalyptic writings, the character and teaching of the Rabbis, and the Apocryphal Gospels.

The Apocryphal books of the Old Testament comprise a body of literature belonging in the main to the two centuries preceding Christ. They fill a gap between the Old Testament and the New, and tell us much of what the people were thinking about during that time. They help us to recreate for ourselves the situation out of which, and above which, the Christ arose and our gospels grew.

First Maccabees is the foremost book of the group in historical value. It was written not far from 100 B.C. It deals with the dreadful and glorious wars of the Maccabæan period, and its interests are exclusively national and patriotic. It maintains the theocratic viewpoint throughout, and does not rise above the trials and the hopes of the people of Israel. Its point of pride is in the military achievements of Judas Maccabæus and his heroic brothers. The situation with which the book deals and the key to its spirit cannot be presented better than by the following quotations. "Now Jerusalem lay void as a wilderness; there was none of her children that went in or out. The sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the stronghold; the heathen had their habitation in that place; and joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased." "And Judas said, 'Arm

yourselves, and be valiant men, and see that ye be in readiness against the morning, and that ye may fight with those nations that are assembled together against us to destroy us and our sanctuary; for it is better for us to die in battle, than to behold the calamities of our people and our sanctuary.' "

The book of Tobit, written, it is thought, about a century before Christ, is a story of captivity in Nineveh. It is a mediocre piece of writing intended to inculcate honesty and alms-giving. " Its marvels and angelology are of a debased kind. Asmodeus, the evil spirit, is represented as capable of lust for women." Magic plays a goodly part in the story. The smoke arising from the heart and liver of a fish is used to drive away an evil spirit, and the gall of a fish, to cure blindness. The poem in which Tobit expresses his thanksgiving is quite fit to rank with the devotional psalms, but its viewpoint respecting Jerusalem and the nation is still the old theocratic one. Curses are pronounced on all that hate Jerusalem, and blessings forever on all that love her. The psalm ends with the cry,

" Let my soul bless God, the great King.
For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds and precious stones,
Thy walls and towers and battlements with pure gold.

And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with
beryl,
And with carbuncle, and stones of Ophir.
And all her streets shall say, Alleluiah;
And they shall praise him, saying,
Blessed be God, who hath extolled it forever."

The book of Judith is a fiction celebrating the heroine for whom it is named. Judith is a second Esther, greatly praised and admired, though the rôle that she plays is far less noble than that of Esther. The scene is laid in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, but the story was written after the time of the Maccabees.

Holofernes, a captain of Nebuchadnezzar, sets out to take vengeance on all the earth. On his road to Jerusalem, he lays siege to Bethulia. Judith, a beautiful widow, pretends to desert her people, gains access to his court on the plea of desiring to assist him in his conquest of the land, leads him after some days by means of her beauty and attractions into a season of feasting and revelry, seizes him by the hair and cuts off his head while he is in a drunken stupor, conceals the head in a bag, and on the pretext of going out of the camp to pray carries it to Bethulia, delivers it to her people, and instructs them how to raise the siege. Her speech to her people as she delivers to them the head of Holofernes brings out the climax to the story.

"Then said Judith unto them, Hear me now, my brethren, and take this head, and hang it on the highest place of your walls. And so soon as the morning shall appear and the sun shall come forth, take every one his weapons, and go forth, every valiant man out of the city, and set ye a captain over them as though ye would go down into the field toward the watch of the Assyrians; but go not down. Then shall they take their armor and shall go into their camp, and raise up the captains of the army of Assur, and they shall run to the tent of Holofernes, and shall not find him. Then fear shall fall upon them and they shall flee before your face. So ye, and all that inhabit the coast of Israel, shall pursue them, and overthrow them as they go." The Assyrians were defeated, and Judith was praised in a triumphal song, celebrating her brave indelicate deeds.

"She put off the garment of her widowhood
For the exaltation of those that were oppressed in Israel,
And anointed her face with ointment,
And bound her hair in a mitre,
And took a linen garment to deceive him.
Her sandals ravished his eyes,
Her beauty took his mind prisoner,
And the fauchon passed through his neck."

Ecclesiasticus, or The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, is a voluminous work of homely, practical, worldly wisdom, quite comparable to the book of Proverbs. It belongs to the large body of wisdom literature peculiar to the Hebrew people. Though written at a late date as compared with the main body of such writings, its spirit and atmosphere are unchanged from theirs.

Portions of the book of Baruch are supposed to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 A.D. It probably belongs to the late years of the Maccabæan period. It looks to the past rather than the future. Its situation is in Babylon, and it is professedly written in part by Baruch while he was a captive there. In part it professes to be a message from Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon. The whole situation is distinctly Jewish, and it is anti-sympathetic with alien peoples. Even the few lines that are supposed to forecast the coming of Christ cannot fairly, in view of their context, be made to bear such an interpretation.

As to the story of Susanna, it is a pity that it survived. It is intended to teach a moral lesson, but it is crude in the extreme.

The story of Bel and the Dragon is another myth of the Babylonian times, in which Dan-

iel outwits the priests of the god Bel, gains favor with the king, and destroys both Bel and the Dragon.

The Song of the Three Children is a late legend, another Babylonian romance. It puts a prayer and a song into the mouths of the three who, according to the book of Daniel, were cast into the furnace. It tells us that "the angel of the Lord came down into the oven together with Azarias and his fellows, and smote the flame of fire out of the oven, and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt them. Then the three, as out of one mouth, praised, and glorified, and blessed God in the furnace, saying,

> "Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers;
> And to be praised and exalted above all forever.
> And blessed is thy glorious and holy name
> And to be praised and exalted above all forever."

This is the beginning of the song. It is a nature hymn, running on through forty couplets, each repeating the refrain above, and altogether reminding one of the 103rd Psalm, though inferior to it. Further description of these books would be both wearisome and unnecessary. Enough has been said to show

the student that the gulf between the gospels and these books is a very wide one. Their field lies wholly within the past. It is ethnic rather than catholic, theocratic rather than democratic, governmental rather than inspirational, and militant rather than pacific. As compared with the nobler books of the Old Testament canon these Apocryphal books present to us the literature of decadence. Together they weave a literary shroud for the dying theocracy. There is no breath of life in them. They do not prepare for the new age except as death prepares by the removal of the old for the coming of the new. There is nothing in them out of which to make a Matthew, a Mark, a Luke, or a John. The Christ ideal is not there.

Of the Apocalyptic writings preceding the days of Jesus the Book of Enoch and the Sibylline Oracles may be named as most characteristic and as bearing directly on our theme. The former is a library rather than a volume, and has been divided by modern scholars into five books. It belongs to the last two centuries of the pre-Christian era, much of it was probably suggested by the book of Daniel, it sprang (like other apocalypses) from periods of persecution and distress, and it has a varied and unknown authorship. It is quoted in the four-

teenth and fifteenth verses of the book of Jude. Edersheim says of it, "It professes to be a vision vouchsafed to the patriarch (Enoch), and tells of the fall of the angels and its consequences, and of what he saw and heard in his rapt journeys through heaven and earth. Of deepest, though often of sad interest is what it says of the kingdom of Heaven, of the Advent of the Messiah and his kingdom, and of the last things." Its forecast of the Messianic age is presented in terms that are decidedly materialistic, and that of the Millennium in terms of sensuous enjoyment. To the kingdom of the Messiah Israel is to be gathered, its people coming from the four quarters of heaven riding in carriages and borne as on the wings of the wind. The Messiah is heralded in glowing terms, such as "The Son of Man," "The Elect," "The Just One," and "The Son of God," but the content of these terms in the mind of the time is indicated by the fact that he is heralded also as "the first of the white bulls," "the great Animal among them, having great and black horns on his head, whom all the beasts of the field and all the fowls of heaven dread, and to whom they cry at all times."

Of the Sibylline Oracles a word must suffice. They comprise a varied body of apoca-

lyptic writings extending over a long period, some of them pre-Christian, some post-Christian. Of the third book Edersheim says: "Dating from a century and a half before Christ it presents a picture of Messianic times, generally admitted to have formed the basis of Virgil's description of the Golden Age, and of similar heathen expectations. In these Oracles the Messiah is 'the King sent from heaven' who would judge every man in blood and splendour of fire. The vision of Messianic times opens with a reference to 'the King whom God will send from the sun.'" This book enumerates a number of world powers similar to, but not coördinate with, those of Daniel and foretells a period of woe preceding the advent of the Messiah. The work of the Messiah was to destroy the enemies of God, to deliver the people of Israel, and to restore the throne of Israel to a son of Judah.

Schooled in such writings as these the Jews naturally found fault with the simple, practical, teaching life of Jesus. "If he were the true Messiah was he not," says Dean Farrar, "according to all the legends of their nation to enrich and crown them, and to banquet them on pomegranates from Eden, and 'a vineyard of red wine,' and upon the flesh of Behe-

moth and Leviathan, and the great bird Bar Juchne?"

The Messianic ideals of the Jews in the times of Jesus were distinctly national and theocratic and conservative as against the universal and democratic and progressive reality which we find in the gospels. This appears on the pages of the gospels themselves wherever they reflect, as they frequently do, the current Jewish expectancy. Even the songs of the infancy as treasured by Luke are not free from a distinctly national cast and limitation. The song of Zacharias, Luke 1:67 f., is especially noteworthy in this respect. Its viewpoint is purely a Jewish one. It is only by a strained interpretation that it can be made to serve as a Christian hymn. It was this national view of the Messianic king and kingdom that troubled Herod when he heard that there was born "a King of the Jews." It was this that caused John the Baptist to stumble and doubt at last, and to send two of his disciples to say to Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" John could not see in the peasant teacher and healer with his band of fisherman followers the glorious king and military hero that even he expected. It was this that the people had in view when, after Jesus had fed the five thousand, they came to "take

him by force and make him a king." The two on their way to Emmaus said sadly, "We hoped it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." After his resurrection, and as he was about to return to the Father, his disciples said to him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to *Israel?*" Nothing could be more pathetic than this. Spite of all Christ's teaching, his death, his resurrection, his catholic commission, his insistence upon the ethical and the spiritual, these Jew-fettered disciples could not dream of anything higher for him to do than restore the theocracy, and bring back to Israel the times of David and Solomon and Hezekiah. They hated Rome. Their horizon was no broader than Israel. For Israel alone their sun of salvation had arisen, and in Israel it must set, unless the Master could through his resurrection, and commission, and gift of the Holy Spirit, force them into larger thought.

The same view of the Messianic kingdom as limited to Israel appears in the best writings of contemporary times outside of the New Testament. The Psalter of Solomon was written about 50 B.C. It consists of eighteen hymns attributed to Solomon. Edersheim says, "The seventeenth Psalm bursts into this strain: 'Blessed are they who shall live in

those days, in the reunion of the tribes which God brings about. And no wonder, since they are the days when the King, the Son of David, having purged Jerusalem, and destroyed the heathen by the word of his mouth, would gather together a holy people which he would rule with justice, and judge the tribes of his people, dividing them over the land according to tribes; when no stranger would any longer dwell among them."

Even Philo, most philosophic, most cultured of the Jews, most influenced by the outside world, especially the Hellenic, embraced this fond and futile hope of the restoration of his people to Palestine, and the centralization of their theocratic cult and reign in Jerusalem. "However low the condition of Israel might be," he said, "or however scattered to the ends of the earth, the banished would on a given sign be set free in one day. Gathering as by one impulse, the dispersed would return from Hellas, from the lands of the barbarians, from the isles, and from the continents, led by a divine, superhuman apparition, invisible to others, and visible only to themselves. On their arrival in Palestine the waste places and the wilderness would be inhabited, and the barren land transformed into fruitfulness."

Such was the wild, sad, patriotic dream of

the Jews. It passed over into rabbinism, and became more and more fantastic by the accretion of a thousand extravagances. In its crude materialism, its harsh hatred of the gentile world, its glorious but misguided patriotism, its deathless devotion to the things of the past, its fanatical and furious adherence to an impossible programme, it confronted Jesus. He alone saw its folly, dared to oppose it, sought to correct it, mourned over it, and died under its ban. In sharp antagonism to it he presented his spiritual programme, defended it with his life, sealed it with his blood, arose from the dead in its vindication, and sent his disciples out to herald it through all the earth. Meanwhile the Holy City went down in blackness and ashes; the land was devastated; and the devoted people were driven out more than ever among the gentiles whom they hated. And there that programme would have ended had it not been for the strange fact that a skeleton hand of the same impossible hope reaches still through the centuries, and points to-day to the dream of Zionism.

Another of the prevailing ideals of the Jews in the days of Jesus is indicated by the word rabbinism. But to understand that word requires the help of many pages. Its method and its material are wholly foreign to us. It

is hard to put ourselves into touch with it, and to attain to an appreciation of it. Yet without this it is impossible to value aright the spirit and teachings of Jesus, his attitude toward the scholasticism of his day, and the emancipation from it wrought out in his life and character. Barely enough of the spirit and teachings of rabbinism have been used in the above essays to frame effectively the argument, and to enliven the theme. A further study of the subject by way of the presentation of Hillel, "the loftiest figure which Rabbinism has produced," seems advisable. For this presentation we are indebted for the most part to the pages of Dean Farrar, Excursus III, in the Appendix to his Life of Christ. Of this Rabbi he says, "He seems to have been really learned, humble, peaceful, and enlightened; but the distance between him and Jesus is a distance absolutely immeasurable, and the resemblance of his teaching to that of Jesus is the resemblance of the glowworm to the sun. Their whole scope and method are utterly different. Hillel rested on precedent, Jesus spoke with authority. Hillel spoke in the schools to students and separatists; Jesus in the streets and by the roadsides to publicans and sinners. Hillel confined his teaching to Jerusalem; Jesus travelled the length and breadth of Palestine. Hillel

mainly occupied himself with the Levitical law and modified its regulations to render them more easy and more palatable; Jesus taught only the moral law, and extended its application from external actions to the very thoughts of the heart. Would Jesus ever have uttered a sentiment so deeply dyed in Phariseeism as this? . . . 'No uneducated man easily avoids sin; no common person is pious.' Is not this the very echo of the haughty, exclusive insolence which said, 'Have any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this mob that knoweth not the law are cursed.' Is it not the very spirit which Christ's whole life and practice combated, and which his whole teaching most utterly condemned?"

To an inquirer who desired to be taught the whole law while standing on one leg Hillel said, "What is unpleasing to thee do not to thy neighbour." This is his wisest saying, and it is at best but a negative form of the golden rule. It falls far below the positive teaching of Jesus.

Among the stories told to illustrate the high character and self-command of Hillel is the following, greatly abbreviated. A rude fellow on a bet of 400 zouzim tried to make him angry. After disturbing him with three foolish and impertinent questions, which the Rabbi

graciously answered, commending them as "important questions, my son," the matter was given up with a petulant explanation. Whereupon the Rabbi said, "Calm thyself, my son; better that thou shouldst lose for Hillel's sake 400, aye, and 400 more zouzim, than that Hillel should lose patience." This may be judged as a fair enough bit of legendary matter, but it is not comparable to the situations and answers, dignified and elevated, so frequent in the gospel presentation of Christ.

Hillel was not above a grain of double-dealing for occasional convenience. "In opposition to Shammai he directed that in the bridal song the beauty of the bride should be praised, no matter how ugly she were; and on one occasion to avoid any question or dispute with the school of Shammai he passed off an ox, which was to be sacrificed for him, as a cow." "The Rabbis praise these proceedings," adds Dr. Farrar, "yet we feel instinctively what a shock they would have given us, how injurious they would have been to the world's morality, had they occurred in the life of Christ. He alone of all who ever lived in the world could say, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' Little as we know by comparison of Socrates, of Confucius, of Sakya Mouni,

of Hillel, of Mahomet, and much as we know of Jesus, yet in the scanty records of their lives we find much to disapprove. But there is nothing which is not divine and sinless in the four-fold record of the life of Christ."

"One of Hillel's most celebrated and elaborate decisons was on the trumpery series of questions as to whether one might or might not eat an egg which a hen had laid on a feast day, when the feast day came in connection with the Sabbath. This precious inquiry gives its name *Bitsa* [egg] to an entire Talmudic treatise. Is it possible to imagine that Jesus would have treated it otherwise than with withering irony?"

"Owing to a vague expression in Deut. 24:1 Hillel ruled that a man might put away his wife even if she cooked his dinner badly." A wide gap lies between this and Christ's ruling on the subject of divorce. It would seem that with the rival schools of the Rabbis, namely of Hillel and of Shammai, divorce was esteemed as a much more trivial question than a myriad of trifling forms pertaining to the temple cult, the Sabbath, and ceremonial washings. Edersheim, speaking of the differences between these schools, says, "Many, very many of them are so utterly

trivial and absurd, that only the hairsplitting ingenuity of theologians can account for them; others so profane that it is difficult to understand how any religon could coexist with them. Conceive for example two schools in controversy whether it was lawful to kill a louse on the Sabbath!"

Renan, with more ingenuity than acumen, has suggested that Hillel was the real master of Jesus. To this Farrar replies as follows: "He and his school and Shammai and his school spent a century of unprofitable and groundless jangling on the exegesis of two short words of the law [*ervath dabhar,* Deut. 24:1] without approaching a single sound principle, which would have rendered their quarrel needless; but Jesus furnished that principle, and solved the question forever the moment it was brought before him [Matt. 19:3-9]. Let any candid reader consult the translation of the Talmudic treatise *Beracoth,* by M. Schwab, and see the kind of miserably minute questions of infinitely little matters of formalism which occupied the mind and life of Hillel, and calmly consider the mixture of scorn and pity with which Jesus would have treated the notion that there was in such questions any intrinsic importance. He will then be able to judge for himself of

the folly and untenability of the statement that Hillel was the true master of Jesus!"

The almost unbroken silence of our canonical gospels respecting the childhood and young manhood of Jesus is a remarkable evidence of their historical character. Had our four gospels been mythical in character they certainly would not have missed the opportunity of weaving round the wonderful child any number of marvellous fictions. To fiction writers the temptation would have been great, and could not have been resisted. On the contrary, but one simple, natural story breaks the silence of those thirty years. At twelve years of age the grave and thoughtful boy lingered in the temple, and was found by his parents, "sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions." They might well have been "amazed at his understanding and his answers." There is nothing at all miraculous about it; nothing overwrought, or fabulous or fantastic. It is just such an incident as fits naturally into the experience of such a child. "But how different," says Farrar, "is the boy Christ of the New Testament apocrypha! He is mischievous, petulant, forward, revengeful. Some of the marvels told of him are simply aimless and puerile, as when he pulls a short board to the

requisite length; or moulds sparrows of clay, and then claps his hands to make them fly; or throws all the clothes into the dyer's vat, and then draws them out, each stained the requisite colour. But some are on the contrary simply distasteful and inconsiderate, as when he vexes and shames and silences those who wish to teach him; or rebukes Joseph; or turns his playmates into kids. And others are simply cruel and blasphemous, as when he strikes dead with a curse the boys who offend or run against him, until at last there is a storm of popular indignation, and Mary is afraid to let him leave the house."

These Apocryphal Gospels of the infancy and childhood of Jesus belong to the second century. They sprang from a craving on the part of certain classes for something abnormal and more sensational than the sober, simple history. They were rejected by the church in those strenuous middle years of the second century, during which she, under stress of persecution and false teaching, selected her list of authoritative writings. She sifted finely; she rejected much chaff; she kept our gospels because they were found by her worthy to be kept. But the inferior, post-apostolic works continued to circulate among the less enlightened classes, spite of the disapproval of

the church and its great leaders. Their value to us, as intimated above, is in the striking contrast they present between their own legendary and puerile matter and the genuinely frank, unstrained, unadorned, matter-of-fact recital of our canonical gospels. Soberly trodden, every pathway of induction open to us relative to these writings leads to reliability.

"Shall we suppose the evangelic history to be a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend," answers Rousseau, "it does not bear the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition in fact only shifts the difficulty without obviating it. It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history than that one should furnish the subject of it."

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